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The World Soccer Championship caused a tidal wave of euphoria to sweep over Germany in 2006. The world was presented with a brighter and friendlier image of Germany. And the Germans, liberated from the «German pathos» of the past, were able to cheerfully wave their flags in celebration. For Germans, 2006 was a year of reinvention. Time will tell whether and how long this new feeling lasts — especially in light of the upcoming anniversaries in 2008 and 2009. These two years will commemorate fundamental events in Germany history that will surely force Germans to assess the present image they have of themselves. It is already apparent that the commemorative festivities will be nothing less than an inventory carried out with typical German meticulousness. The Federal Cultural Foundation has been bombarded with numerous inquiries and proposals concerning the anniversaries and, in response, has developed several large projects of its own. >>>

In 1968 German identity underwent a revolutionary change. Forty years later, many have an ambivalent view of the 68er generation (see the essays by Klaus Theweleit and Manuel Gogos) which could be interpreted as an indicator of a differentiated historical perspective — a significant legacy of the 68ers that is rarely acknowledged. Today's commemorative culture refuses to close controversial chapters of German history — an expression of a critical approach. To what extent does history influence our present-day image of ourselves, and what events of history do we regard as integral to our cultural heritage? Such questions lie at the heart of the essays in this issue of our magazine. >>> The article by Fahlenbrach/Klimke/Scharloth focuses on the European and global dimension of the 68er movement — a perspective that gains a whole new quality in light of today's international relations. >>> The same is true for the events that will be commemorated in 2009 — not only the founding of West Germany and East Germany in 1949, but also the end of the German division in 1989 that represented a political «change» in the pan-European context. In «Portents of Change?» Rainer Rother closely examines East German and Central European film productions in search of the slight tremors that preceded the seismographic shift in the political landscape that occurred with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Does culture (still) play an important role for our cultural memory by foreshadowing significant events through artistic forms of expression? >>> In other cases, artistic works can shed light on events of societal significance. They can illuminate our subconscious or socially conventionalized strategies for dealing with the historically related challenges of our day. We have printed several literary pieces by Marcel Beyer, László Márton and Judith Kuckart in this issue which illustrate the European dimension of cultural memory based on German-Hungarian cultural relations. >>> Artists and cultural supporters might be familiar with the memorable, but dubious opinion stated by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein: «In art it is difficult to say something which is just as good as saying nothing at all.» Yet if art can help find modern forms of conveying information that express more than what discussions and scientific texts can communicate, then it is truly indispensable for examining our cultural heritage. Art gives form to «premonitions», subconscious ideas, moments we have yet to experience, things we have forgotten and things we should remember, and perhaps even ideas which we are unable to express. In the sense of Wittgenstein, the articles in this issue can only speak to us, encourage and mobilize our human strength if culture provides us with the space and circumstances to test our individual and society-forming potential (see the articles and reports by Ulrike Gropp on citizen involvement in East German cultural projects, and Irene Grüter and Olaf A. Schmitt on the *Home Game* theatre projects in Weimar and Heidelberg). This potential should be experienced, lived, strengthened — and yes! — financed.

# «LET'S MAKE A HAPPENING AND THROW THE COMRADES OUT»

BY  
KATHRIN  
FAHLENBRACH,  
MARTIN  
KLIMKE  
AND  
JOACHIM  
SCHARLOTH

## 1 Culture and Protest

In response to an escalating conflict with their comrades from the SDS Westberlin (Socialist German Student Association, West Berlin) during the occupation of the German Department at the Free University of Berlin in June 1968, the Situationist provocation group *Kommune 1* proudly demanded: «Let's make a happening and throw the comrades out. Not everyone has a head crammed with books and made out of wood.» The commune members had attracted public attention by blasting Beat music from the windows of the institute and ridiculing the form and goals of the occupation. «When we came to the German Department, everything had already become «collectivized means of production». (Posters saying «Stealing books is counter-revolutionary» were attached with thumbtacks to make sure the walls weren't damaged).» While the members of the SDS regarded Beat music as apolitical and called on their comrades to play «The International» as well as initiate a political discussion, the commune thought that the entire occupation was completely lacking a «happening» character. There seemed to be no way of resolving the dispute. And when the authorities eventually cut the power supply, the commune was forced to leave the institute in resignation, declaring, «While we wanted to change the department, the others wanted to protect it.»

Despite the decidedly local flair of this episode, the student and youth revolts of the 1960s and especially in that magical year of 1968 were a global phenomenon, resulting from a variety of political and cultural developments in the Western world which can be traced back to the late 1950s. Perhaps the most significant condition for the emergence of the «68 movement» was the powerful economic upswing of the 1950s. In the United States, Great Britain, Germany and other nations, the 1950s heralded an economic boom that opened the door to a broad-based consumer society from which the middle class benefited the most. This sudden prosperity resulted in new social freedoms which expressed themselves in a growing recreational culture. It also went hand-in-hand with the discovery and increasing influence of young people as an economic factor. This young post-war generation, the so-called «baby boomers», not only flooded the universities in the early 1960s and severely strained their capacities, but also possessed a formidable purchasing power which made it a lucrative target group for the fashion and music industry. Commercialization and the cultural-industrial exploitation of youth culture were already visible at the beginning of the decade and continued all through the 1960s.

All of these processes and discourses were disseminated internationally thanks to the development of communication technology, in particular television and international satellite communication. In July 1962, a year after the ZDF broadcasting company was established, NASA's Telstar 1 broadcast the first television pictures from the United States to Europe via satellite. In addition, international airlines expanded their services during the course of the 1960s with a growing number of destinations and decreasing ticket prices. The Cold War and the superpowers' increased cultural-diplomatic efforts to influence global opinion also helped promote transnational exchange at the beginning of the decade. Technological innovation and the internationalized media landscape were integral to improving international channels of communication and reaching a qualitatively new level of socio-cultural networking across national borders well before 1968.

This system of international exchange also created a favourable climate for the emergence of transnational subcultures and protest movements. Raging against consumerism and the spiritual decay of society in the 1950s, the Beat movement or the «Halbstarken» phenomenon provided an important source of inspiration for the young generation. Artistically-minded avant-gardes like the *Situationist International* (SI) similarly organized their activities on a transnational level. Influenced by the existentialism of Sartre und Camus, Dadaism, Surrealism and the Lettrists, they brought together artists from a variety of countries. Other movements were also a rich source of inspiration, such as the African-American civil rights movement, whose iconography, protest methods and political-moral declarations made an impact far beyond America's borders. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Freedom Rides, strategies of direct action and civil disobedience, as well as the media-driven portrayal and denunciation of a system of apartheid in the heart of the Western «free world» all played a crucial role in the politicization process of Western activists. The Black Power faction that developed from the civil rights movement also motivated them to take a firmer and even militant stance against the establish-

ment, which appeared unwilling to compromise. Furthermore, it directed attention to the Third World liberation movements and the legacies of European colonialist policies. This was especially apparent in the case of Vietnam. The American-led war in South East Asia soon became a symbol of the imperialist oppression of the Third World by the free West. Starting in 1965, the growing anti-war movement in the United States not only influenced the style of protests on an international level through the institution of teach-ins. Furthermore, in the footsteps of a firmly established network of international pacifists who had protested the atom bomb since the 1950s, it was able to gather a worldwide following of protesters by the late 1960s, all of whom had one thing in common — their opposition to the Vietnam War. As the conflict escalated, the Viet Cong, Che Guevara and even Mao Zedong thereby became international icons which stood for the uncompromising struggle against the all-powerful, globally operating forces of imperialism.

Yet even the New Left itself was of transnational origin. It was initially a European product, coming into being among circles of the British New Left under the influence of historian E.P. Thompson, which was subsequently transformed by the sociologist C. Wright Mills and other Americans at the beginning of the 1960s. The American SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and its programmatic «Port Huron Statements» of 1962 helped shape its agenda even further and ultimately established it in a transatlantic context. The activists on both sides of the Atlantic had much in common — the rejection of traditional Marxism and its focus on the working class, a fundamental dissatisfaction with the Cold War (its policy of nuclear deterrence and anti-communist ideology) and the condemnation of society's social and political apathy, materialism and capitalistic competitive mindset.

The international interaction between the protest cultures of the Western world thus drew their strength from a collective protest identity which was shored up by common cultural and political interests and strengthened by a global medial discourse. The significance of these networks increased even further as they addressed problems which appeared to have international relevance (imperialism, bipolarity of the Cold War, etc.). This enabled them to construct an image of a global enemy that people could also relate to on a local level. With universities as the breeding grounds of protest, and supported by prominent intellectuals such as Herbert Marcuse, the late 1960s saw the emergence of an international language of dissent which was frequently of American provenance.

## 2 Differences in Lifestyle and Communication between Kommune 1 and SDS

What may seem a *lingua franca* of protest in hindsight was actually a highly diverse mix of dialects whose speakers sometimes had trouble understanding each other. In Germany, communication often broke down between the fun-loving revolutionaries of everyday life in the commune movement and the agitators of the working class in the SDS — as the events at the German Department at the Free University of Berlin illustrate. In an interview with the magazine *Spiegel*, Rudi Dutschke<sup>1</sup> called the members of Kommune 1 «pitiful neurotics». The commune regarded the Marxists with their abstract argumentation as being oddly inhibited and opposed to sexual pleasure. In response, the SDS passed out flyers provocatively claiming, «Only rational discussion can prevent general copulation» («*Nur die rationale Diskussion verhindert allgemeine Kopulation*»).

The ideological differences between the two were often expressed through their lifestyles and methods of communication. While members of the SDS distanced themselves from the majority of society by wearing casual clothing in every situation, the commune members — following the example of the American hippies — donned the wares of costume hire companies and second-hand shops. Even the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, reporting on the court proceedings against Fritz Teufel and Rainer Langhans, enthusiastically praised the colourful elegance of their commune look, claiming that they made male models look like yesterday's news. Fritz Teufel appeared before the judge dressed in a gold-buttoned orange Mao jacket with purple cuffs and lapels while Langhans, wearing a sparkling red ring on his finger, sported a lime-green jacket with pink buttons and light blue jeans. The radical left-wing student organisation with their shirts and sweaters, jackets and cord trousers looked rather plain in contrast.

Their choice of dress was not the only thing that distinguished the commune from the SDS members; their body language, lifestyles and forms of communication deepened the ideological trenches. While the commune came across as especially relaxed and uninhibited, liv-

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# INTERNATIONAL PROTEST CULTURES AROUND 1968 AND THEIR HISTORICAL IMPACT

ing a communal life sitting upon floors of mattresses, their comrades in the SDS saw themselves as members of the intellectual avant-garde and seemed less interested in cultivating their public image than ostensibly spending time reading.

The language of the SDS, however, was even more complex. In a rapid staccato, its members would string together a series of terms from Marxism, critical theory and psychoanalysis. The speakers could produce monstrous run-on sentences, and those who couldn't quote the classics were clearly at a disadvantage in discussions. Members of the commune movement spoke in a completely different style. They referred to things by their normal names — they got «shagged» or «laid» or had «orgasm problems» and the word «shit» became an all-time favourite expletive. The comrades, both young and old, called each other by their first names. Personal opinions were in high demand since everyone believed the truth could only be found in subjective feelings. In the commune scene, it became a fetish to talk about one's feelings and personal problems. Those who didn't join in were kicked out. While the SDS called for a revolution by means of a scholarly form of communication, the language of the commune was characterized by a direct emotionality that could revolutionize interpersonal relationships. According to the *1st Flyer of the Anti-Authoritarian Man*, «It's not our stronger sexual potency that makes us superior to our parents and teachers — it's our stronger connection to our inner emotions.»

But Kommune 1 and the SDS differed most in their attitude toward image cultivation. While the SDS resisted the tendency of the established press to stylize their most prominent members as leaders, the commune actively worked at cultivating its media image. The commune's members followed and documented the newspaper reports about them with growing enthusiasm as they believed the medial interest in their performative protest would result in completely new possibilities of influencing cultural common sense.

## 3 Mass Media and Protest around 1968

Despite their differences with regard to their forms of protest, Kommune 1 and the SDS found themselves on common ground. The political protest events of the SDS in the public sphere (go-ins, sit-ins, teach-ins, etc.) and the Situationist performance happenings which were more aimed at influencing cultural common sense both intervened in the symbolic order of public life in a spontaneous way. The protesters organized themselves as one symbolic, collective body which pursued the goal of changing the codes of public representation.

Through physical mobilization and the visual staging of their events, both protest scenes bid farewell to the static, hierarchical order of the «long 1950s» by exploring the possibilities of «limited rule-breaking». Especially the highly emotional, generational conflict between the wartime and post-war generation and their children catalytically strengthened the student and youth movement, since its actions were aimed at the traditional values held by their parents' generation — security, authority, class-status thinking, financial security, etc. — while simultaneously representing the new values held by the young generation such as individualism, emotionality and expressivity.

Never before had a protest movement produced new codes of public representation in this way and gained such wide publicity through mass media. The publicly-staged protest events quickly attracted the attention of the mass visual media. In particular, television and photo-heavy print media (such as *Bild* and *Stern*) enthusiastically embraced the visual spectacle of the new protest codes. And even though the right-wing populist media, spearheaded by the Springer publishing company, criminalized the protesters, it didn't take long before the mass media realized that there was money to be made from the students' visual-symbolic taboo-breaking in the public sphere. The interest of the mass media in these protest events was closely linked to a sweeping structural change in the field of public communication that culminated in the triumph of television as the new leader in the media branch and resulted in the conversion to visual codes.

Due to rapid technical, institutional and aesthetic advances, the television industry discovered its own forms of visuality. These included avant-garde forms, such as the ones developed in the music show *Beat-Club*, and new forms of documentarism (*Panorama*). As a consequence of the growing competition with television, visuality also began to play a greater role as a mode of public communication in the print media (which was most obvious in the magazine *Stern*). With the mass media buoyed by this dynamic development, the visual-symbolic taboo-breaks and protest events of the student and youth move-

ment acted as a catalyst that established new, visually converted codes of public representation and communication which were increasingly connected to an emotionalization of public discourse.

All of this resulted in an ambivalent relationship between the mass media and the protest movement of the 1960s. Although the student and youth movement generally criticized and rejected the mass media as a capitalist institution, it eventually became one of their most important allies. Though unintended at first, the mass media provided a forum for protest events which helped mobilize a wide front of sympathizers and ensured that the goals of the movement would be etched into the collective memory of society for many years to come.

## 4 1968 and Its Legacy

The most successful display of protest — as it was the most intensively followed by the media — was the lifestyle of the communes. The Springer-owned newspapers gladly paid for interviews and home-stories from Kommune 1. The stylization of their bodies, their clothes, and their provoking nudity satisfied the public desire for provocative pictures. In its need to deliver intimate details, the media reported on the sexual promiscuity in the commune («Whoever sleeps with the same girl twice is part of the establishment») and the radical elimination of the opposing categories «private» and «public». The commune published conversation protocols that highlighted interpersonal relationships, meticulously documented their daily lives in several books, and candidly described how they educated their children in sexual matters, the practical aspects of which would likely be considered sexual molestation by today's legal standards. Some commune members even dreamed of starting their own pop companies.

After the tumultuous events of 1968, the media lost interest in the communes, though their significance continued to increase. After the SDS was disbanded, flat-shares became the organisational backbone of the protest scene, be it in Frankfurt-Bockenheim or Berlin-Kreuzberg. The members of the «Sponti»-milieu continued to live the basic philosophy of the original communes. They rejected all forms of conformity — for them, authenticity counted most, expressed as informality, spontaneity and emotionality. Everyone felt close to one another, it was easier to touch and hug people, and everyone was on a first-name basis. Conflicts were always discussed in psychological terms and people qualified their opinions as being subjective. It was cool to display personal dismay in public and you were hip if you could talk about your feelings. The staging of emotions and closeness became the trademark of the alternative milieu which set out on a long march towards the centre of society. Following the 1983 election, the Bundestag met in a constitutive session at which a member of the Green Party spoke for the first time. He said something that no member of parliament had ever said before at a constitutive session of the Bundestag. He began his speech with the words: «Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends».

The year 1968 not only softened the boundaries that separated public and private life in Germany. The staging of informality and closeness permeate our lives even today. Some condemn it as a tyranny of intimacy, others praise it for making society more humane, others see it as proof of how everyday culture has become Americanized. This transformation was brought about by the massive commercialization of countercultural clichés, a fundamental change in the representational aesthetics of the media, and a large range of new ideas created by a global protest culture, of which the commune movement with its lifestyle protest was perhaps the most successful of all.

Dr. Kathrin Fahlenbrach is an assistant professor at the Institute of Media and Communication Sciences at the University of Halle. Dr. Martin Klimke is a research fellow at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA) at the University of Heidelberg and is currently a post-doctoral fellow at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. Dr. Joachim Scharloth is an assistant professor at the German Department at the University of Zurich. Kathrin Fahlenbrach is the author of *Protest-Inszenierungen. Visuelle Kommunikation und Kollektive Identitäten in Protestbewegungen* (2002) (Staging Protest. Visual Communication and Collective Identities in Protest Movements). Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth are the editors of *1968. Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung* (2007) (1968. Handbook on the Cultural and Media History of the Student Movement) and *1968 in Europe. A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–77* (forthcoming April 2008). All three authors co-direct the EU Marie Curie Conference and Training Series *European Protest Movements since 1945* supported by the European Union ([www.protest-research.eu](http://www.protest-research.eu)).

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<sup>1</sup> Rudi Dutschke was one of the most prominent spokespersons of the left-wing German student movement of the 1960s. He became a cult figure for the movement after surviving an assassination attempt in 1968.

# GENERATION SUPER 68

Next year an extensive series of events will commemorate, examine and historically evaluate the developments of 1968 and the impact they still have on our lives. The Federal Cultural Foundation is supporting many of these, including the cultural-historical exhibition *The 68ers — Short Summer, Big Impact* in Frankfurt am Main that will address the upheavals of 1968 from the perspective of those who were born after the events took place. These young curators will examine the 68ers' values, opinions, goals, conflicts with their parents' generation, everyday culture and the ideals of an alternative lifestyle. The following article by Manuel Gogos is a delightful portrayal of the dialectic search for answers about the 68 generation.

BY  
MANUEL  
GOGOS

Every generation chooses its generational objects. However, it's amazing how strongly the cohorts of 1968 have identified with the specific experiences of that year and the impact of an ecstatic milieu. And we, the next generation, who are called upon to interpret this complex time, dig like modern-day archaeologists in our own backyards where our parent's happily pubescent wishes are buried, crocodile tears of revolution which we can observe from the safe distance of late birth. Criticism was your guiding principle — to intellectually re-establish the republic somewhere between Marx and Freud. Quoting a generation: «We never wanted to participate, we were different and we knew better. We believed our dreams were real». The aphorisms of traumatized war kids and the hooligans of Nazi parents who teetered at the brink of civilization's destruction at the height of the Cold War. With the probing eyes of ethnologists and the forgiving gaze of therapists, we smile at you across the generational war trenches. Slipping between the fronts of state power and non-parliamentary opposition, we plunge into the past as if it were a movie. Cast in the yellowish light of Super 8 celluloid, masses of people swim against the current. And there we see it, a bit blurred, the *movement*. («Down with Parmenides, Long Live Heraclitus») was visible on the Sorbonne.)

It's not easy to get a view of it, this schizoid year when lectures were bombed and pudding assassinations took place, when department stores of the West went up in smoke and people seriously considered curing German shepherds of their nationalism. Simply too much happened. Good Old Enzensberger reported on the psychedelic double exposures: «A bustle of reminiscences, allegories, self-deceptions, generalizations and projections have taken the place of everything that happened in that breathless year. The experiences are buried beneath the manure piles of the media, of «archived material» [...] depicting a reality that is unofficially unimaginable. My memory, that chaotic, delirious director, plays out an absurd movie with sequences that don't hang together. Everything's been filmed with a shaky handheld camera. I don't recognize most of the actors. The longer I watch the film, the less I understand it. [...] It wasn't possible to understand everything at the same time.» («Memories of a Tumult», in: Jiri Kolář, *Diary 1968*)

That's why the reconstruction of 1968 is bound to have a surreal, cubistic look. One oversized eye, the ear stuck on the wrong place. Sometimes emphatic, sometimes ironic, we hear the echoes of the past: «Adenauer to the Home for the Elderly», «De Gaulle to the Museum». And now it's your turn. The events of 68 have become the focus of historical study. You're on display at the museum of everyday life which you originally made socially acceptable. Here we can view your counterrevolution as a reddish still life and your (failed) utopias as walk-through ensembles. (But after all, you Red (avant-) Guards were the ones who started making pop icons out of your idols, holding evening readings of *From Your Court Files* and publishing *Documents on Commune Research*.)

You women refused to give birth to us lying down. We were born to disobey — (don't) play with the dirty children, (don't) sing their songs. And you read us the riot act — you boys call yourself wild? You're as soft as jelly. And you've hardly got any more *Hair*. And you men taught us. A bunch of little Nazi hunters, filled with dark suspicions, piercing everyone over seventy with distrustful stares. These are the shards of our common family saga, lodged in our hearts, a cultural legacy that you smashed and we're now trying to carefully piece together. Images of that young revolutionary Rocky Dutschke rise to the surface — nobody chose him, he was chosen. For one and a half hours, he preached the revolution on his tip-toes, the apostolically handsome APO spokesman, and spread the Good News: «Comrades! Time is running out. We, too, are being crushed in Vietnam every day, and I don't mean symbolically or metaphorically!»

Then we see the dark, lying images of the Kommune I, the icons of a Situationist International, German section — Langhans, the anti-Shock-Headed Peter and his budding Uschi Obermeier, with her idea of modelling for the revolution, are in league with the Teufel. With the photo series of their avant-garde freak show, they hope to create a public and counter-public disturbance. (Yet who truly knows the heart of a communitard?) Naked bodies laid out in type-case by artisti-

cally talented *Stern* reporters. The court jesters of the nation negotiate their price for exposing everyday life as a colonized sector. Revolutionary players of the world, unite! While international guerrillas do their Marxist Brothers impersonations, the fan mail starts piling up — «Are you automatically a sleaze ball if you let your hair grow out?», «Can I stay overnight with you guys? I'm 14 and my mother's against it». And well-meaning, small-town socialists write in their autograph books: «You prima donnas in Berlin are just as conformist as everyone else.»

Then a shot rang. The revolution began to eat its children. After the Ohnesorg mania subsided, the issue of violence raised its ugly head. And soon the guns were blazing with letters, images and bullets. Following the attempt on his life, Dutschke wrote letter to his would-be assassin Josef Bachmann, saying «You were a only a small gear in the machine.» Bachmann replied, «It wasn't personal.» The wound was bleeding, the private sphere became public. But Andreas Baader was still dancing in the streets with Fritz Teufel. The rest — terrorist attacks by the women's council with weapons of mass embarrassment (breast assault). Poor Theodor «Teddy» Adorno couldn't go out and play with the girls. Shielded by briefcase bearers, illuminating the post-war society with enlightening metaphors of light, he died from injuries caused by his own negative dialectics.

When looking back, this is basically what's most astounding. The phantasmagorical states of excitement in this revolutionary period, its linguistic forms and phrases, its rhetoric of anticipation. *This is the Revolution speaking*: «What we are seeing around the world is no longer a series of demonstrations or strikes, it's a movement. We are about to witness a dramatic crisis take hold of capitalism. But the bourgeoisie will never relinquish its power without a fight, without the pressure of the revolutionary masses. Consequently, the problem of the socialist strategy now lies in explicitly establishing the objective and subjective conditions of revolution. What we are now expecting is the collapse of government.»

We watch them in action on the holodeck<sup>1</sup> — in Berlin, Prague Spring, May in Paris. And let it all have an effect on us, these improbable, these impossible places with thousands of attacks, wall newspapers, graffiti catchphrases in restroom stalls and building facades, proclamations aimed to quash false consciousness, manifests, mottos and slogans, assault-like wake-up calls to passers-by caught up in their everyday routines. In its wide spectrum of materiality, flyers, stones, type and handwriting, silk-screen ink and blood. Produced in the dead of night, scribbled, printed, pasted like crazy: «We leave the fear of red to the cattle», «Society is a meat-eating plant», «Only the truth is revolutionary», «Rape your alma mater», «Sartre is an opportunist», «Daniel Cohn-Bendit is not Brigitte Bardot».

And on the pedestals flanking the market of world views in every direction stand the saints Mao, Che, Ho. The tri-continental trinity that outshines the jungle war of dialectics — anti-capitalistic, anti-imperialistic, anti-colonialist, anti-dictatorial, anti-authoritarian. Martin Luther King quotes Mahatma Gandhi who quoted Thoreau. Degenhardt quotes Mikis Theodorakis who quoted Pablo Neruda. Sartre quotes Fanon who quoted Sartre — solidarity with Cuba, solidarity with Greece, solidarity with Spain, solidarity with Chile, verbal care packages and feeding cups for retired dictators. The neuralgic point of the internationally synchronized protest is located in the lion's den, the USA, the Pentagon. This is where the directors of the showcase war in Vietnam are sitting in their glass house: *The whole world is watching*.

«Vietnam is America's concentration camp», Peter claims. We will never be able to come to terms with this. With the self-certainty that they were right. Their skillful ability to thumb their noses at their enemies. «You're all a bunch of crooks» (K. D. Wolff before an American investigating committee), «We had a great time» (Daniel Cohn-Bendit before a French investigating committee), and everyone in chorus «We are all German Jews». This pretentious, loud-mouth style (Greek: «megaphone»), this overdrive, like the great Chairman Mao who said, «All imperialists are paper tigers». The New Left, in search of the revolutionary subject, flocked to him in droves. The workers were yesterday, the «guest workers» are today, the Third World is today. And the gentle revolutionary Che Guevara is their Messiah — «The duty of the revolutionary is to start a revolution». In his «Message to the Peo-

ples of the World», he proclaimed that the United States was the arch-enemy of the human race far earlier than anyone else: «Take the war to the cities. Create two, three, many Vietnams». (Even the RAF thought the world of their Palestinian buddies). He wanted to chase all the movers and shakers out of the front yard of the world which would one day belong to the «people». Even today, the Pantocrator of sub-culture can be found smoking his Cuban cigar between strings of beads to ward off the evil eye in a tobacco shop in Algiers. You predicted this. That morphed, cloned photo by Alberto Korda in a Lebanese highway underpass, in the flat of a Chinese prostitute — Che as the world's cultural heritage, as a thorn in the side of globalization.

If only your theologians of liberation in your c-groups hadn't taken everything so seriously — with Stalinist self-criticism — revealing those in your communes who were guilty of false consciousness. Taking your Marxist-Leninist agitation to the factories, sacrificing your life for this worker thing. Serve the people and follow your orders in all that you do. A contemporary, who was there in the middle of it all, remembers travelling to Italy after the excitement of that year, living in the country so he could forget the whirlwind of sensations. He remembers hearing them at night, those charismatic speeches by the leading voices, and that it took years for him to calm his nerves and silence the voices.

That's why we feel closer to the hippies — «He who conquers his enemies is a hero, he who conquers himself is a master.» It's written in the Bhagavad Gita which they imported from India. The Beatles (have you seen them in Rishikesh) sang about it: *You say you want a revolution / Well you know / We all want to change the world. / You better free your mind instead / But if you go carrying pictures of Chairman Mao / You ain't going to make it with anyone anyhow.*

And that's why, dear 68ers, we thank you for everything. The reversal of all hierarchies, the end of all authority, the limitless expansion of pleasure. For a short moment, it seemed that everything was possible, you succeeded in your putsch and put imagination in power. Our fate is to walk the line between acceptance and rejection and bring the patricide to an end. The adult shape of our next generation is trying to place your rough contours in the right perspective and culturally smooth them out. You have to admit one thing — that «night of the barricades» during the Paris May Days — that was nothing more than a quote. But we still believe that «the beach lies beneath the pavement». Now that we have both become older and wiser, we can toast each other at the fortieth 68 revival. Molotov cocktails at happy hour, knocking back the taste of revolution, raising our glasses: *All the good die young*.

Manuel Gogos, born in 1970, has doctoral degrees in literature, philosophy and theology. He is a literary critic and freelance writer for a number of newspapers and television broadcasters, such as the DLF, NZZ and 3 Sat. At the moment, he is co-curating the exhibition project *The 68ers — Short Summer, Big Impact* at the History Museum in Frankfurt/Main.

*The 68ers — Short Summer, Big Impact. Exhibition at the History Museum in Frankfurt am Main, 1 May — 31 August 2008*  
Artistic director: Jan Gerchow. Curated by Andreas Schwab (ca), Beate Schappach (ca) in cooperation with Manuel Gogos.

In addition to describing the societal circumstances in the summer of 1968, this exhibition will present a vivid portrayal of the world of the 68 generation with detailed replicas of a commune, a «Revolutionary Club» meeting room, a street scene, etc. Targeted at younger audiences, the exhibition will present an image of this era that includes both the historic tension between programmatic ideas and everyday reality and the historic and mental changes which have occurred since. The «big impact» of the 68 movement is clearly evident in the social development of the past forty years. On the other hand, the span of four decades enables us to evaluate the movement and its repercussions more objectively. Conceived as a multi-media memory panorama, this exhibition includes original documents (flyers, banners, wall newspapers, etc.), photos, everyday objects, audio and video recordings, music, and much more.

# 68 TOTAL HYBRID

BY  
KLAUS  
THEWELEIT

**S**ixty-eight is a phantom, an object and product of legend. Now forty years later, it's normal, because history is always present in our lives (if history is ever «present»), but in a modified form. However, the fact that the memory of 68 is being influenced by misrepresentation is *not* normal. The German storehouse of history refuses to make room for any halfway «revolutionary» processes in its own country. It would much rather come to terms with its past by banishing it from memory, or to put it more mildly, treating it with a sarcastic-ironic attitude which keeps the revolution at a distance by circumnavigating the burdensome lives of the undead elders. (Question: Where in the German storehouse is the armed uprising of the Ruhr workers in March 1920?)

**I. Legends.** According to popular legend, the 68ers brought the political *tristesse* of the grey Adenauer era to an end. There is something *true* to this, but the heart of the legend is wrong, as is generally the case with legends. Those born in the last years of WWII — which include most 68ers — were about 14 years old in the mid 1950s and were active participants in a cultural upheaval. In school, children weren't allowed to wear jeans, boys weren't allowed to wear their hair long and girls couldn't wear trousers. In 1956, things were suddenly changing all over the country, long-haired boys, jeans, jeans for girls, Rock 'n' Roll at school dances, teenagers kissing in public, smoking, things that had been forbidden in 1955 or hadn't even existed. For us kids, these years were not gloomy at all — they were extremely exciting.

And it didn't stop. In the beginning of the 1960s, our generation was the first (along with other 20-year-olds in other countries) to experience sexual freedom thanks to the pill. You didn't have to end up having a baby (= death penalty). The radio brought us Black music which had been punishable by death just fifteen years earlier, Be Bop. *Oh Lord, Don't Let Them Drop That Atomic Bomb on Me. Don't let them drop it! Stop it! Be bop it!* Charlie Mingus. It's impossible to comprehend 68 without knowing the background. The first post-war generation experienced things that had *never existed* before and things that *never should* have happened. And when they started asking their parents about what they did during the Hitler years and their parents replied, «Nothing, nothing bad,» the 15-year-olds said, «You're full of it» and stopped talking too their parents — which also had never happened before. The members of the 68 generation were experienced *convention breakers*. This is what distinguished them from other generations and the typical generation gap. If I were a young person today, I'd probably envy them (and by nature, have to rebel against them).

**II. 68 is full of contradictions.** This idea is missing in practically every legend and especially ironisation. The basis of this contradiction: *Make Love, Not War* is as valid as *Weapons for the Vietcong*, there was no way around it, it was self-evident. The same goes for being pro- and anti-American. The many contradictions in one and the same person and organization resulted from the condition of modern people, from the extent of their real, schizoid personalities. It was true in 68, as it is today, except *all* the political parties, institutions, associations and the rest of the movers and shakers of society today are either too cowardly or too stupid to talk to people that way. They act as if they were free of contradiction, using words like «logically», and «consequently», and calling it «argumentation». But 68 was neither logical nor consequent, didn't care one iota for the predominant systems of thought, tried «liberating itself from the stigma of the gas chambers» (according to Norbert Elias) with its own homemade version of Marxism that was so frowned upon in the FRG, and, following the dictates of spontaneism, caused lots of trouble and nonsense. Society hasn't yet learned the lessons of contradiction — and therefore, makes jokes about it.

**III. The first major reckoning with 68,** which I personally encountered, addressed the basic ambivalence of the 68er uprising and revolution. I came across it in one of the many independent «scene zines» of the 70s and 80s that produced three or four issues before sinking back to their underground nirvana. It was written by a member of the next generation who treated us like «elders» even though we were only fifteen years apart. The writer complained about the *insatiability* of 68, the excessiveness of our view of reality. We hadn't left anything to our children, no space to grow, no areas of experience untouched. We had somehow put our mark on *everything* — rebellion against our parents' generation and the state, protest against their quiet acquiescence during the Nazi years, the sexual revolution — we had grazed over the entire private and public field of life, drugs, music, the communes, the revolution at the universities and radical lifestyles, free love, anti-authoritarian playgroups, self-awareness groups, the Beatles and India, the guru system, all the sexual and other perversions in underground comics, transvestism in the Warhol Factory, the plundering of psychoanalysis, Marx and the anarchy theorists, the anti-colonial struggle of oppressed peoples which we laid claim to *for ourselves*, playing Tupamaros and Black Panthers, presumptuous experts on internationalism who felt justified intervening in every conflict anywhere in the world, feminism and planting the seeds of ecologism. We had left nothing, absolutely NOTHING untouched, sponging off the movies, closing the chapter on literature and philosophy, taking political praxis to mean *violation praxis* and proclaiming it as the only art, replacing all the other arts. And to top off the list of horrors, promoting

terrorism, a caricature of armed resistance. Everything not only *grazed over and eaten up*, but — at the heart of the accusation — everything messed up, started but not finished, the long list of cool things contaminated, poisoned for the following generations, the whole bowl of porridge ruined along with the political forms of organization in those authoritarian communist cadre groups led by old 68ers. Fodder for sarcastic writers en masse.

**IV. Nothing less than the accusation of scorched earth,** a low blow, which it was meant to be. It was personal. It hit hard and hit close to home. Of course, it was *unfair* to the heroic efforts of those who revolted, those 68ers who sacrificed their careers, the selfless efforts to finally *civilize German post-war society*, as some occasionally praised the agitative work of the 68ers, but in a way that put the movement in a *favourable* light. I truly do not believe that it is possible to historically «come to terms» with 68 without coming to terms first with our own barbarisms in our protest events and activities. Not the classical barbarisms that result from cultural backwardness, but the barbaric behaviour caused by expecting too much from ourselves and thinking too much of ourselves. Most of the goals of 68 were simply too large to solve by ourselves — *total, permanent world revolution*, somewhat delusional. When people tackle problems that are «too big» for them in terms of their own knowledge and abilities, they begin to cut corners. And to conceal the fact that they are cutting corners, they begin to lie. The last of the 68ers became entangled in this kind of self-deception near the end of the 70s, in a kind of undefined state of sympathy with the killer club of truly super-deceivers — the completely phony RAF heroes. They weren't funny *at all*.

The journalist who wrote the article of reckoning was aware of all of this. He had *perceived* something — to use the key term in my own theory. The only way to really be sure of something is to compare one's *perception of reality* with that of other people around you, and not some imagined, self-asserted postulate or dictum from whomever. What you say, what you think, do and write has to be *true*. This is exactly what the last of the 68ers lost sight of in their degeneration, in what became the RAF in 1977.

**V. The air of accusation in the underground magazine** roused something within me. I'd had similar feelings at the beginning of the 60s when I first delved into the books by Henry Miller and the American Beat poets. They, too, had already *done* everything that a 20-year-old Bohemian student would have dreamt of, they'd discovered and experimented with everything, reflected on culture backwards and forwards and rejected it, lived differently, loved differently, perceived the world differently and wrote it down in a tapeworm longer than *The Road* from which they drew their nourishment and enthusiasm — sexual freedom, the rise of jazz, the disintegration of the authoritarian, oedipal style of writing, pioneered by Joyce and countless other amazing poets of modernity. Everything was ploughed and tilled over. Was there any virgin territory left to explore, was there any good reason to pick up the pen and write? New territory was discovered in 1967 in and on flyers. They had left us this Ohnesorg space — the direct attack on the state, the claim to political power, this is where we could outshine them, this was where we could achieve something. And in this area, 68 went the extra mile — with a trail of texts longer than the streets that protesters marched down starting in 1967 and wouldn't relinquish for three or four more years. (We were only vaguely aware that a similar trail of texts had already existed in the international labour movement of the 1920s and 30s. But we didn't allow Rosa Luxembourg and the Komintern to dim our spirits.) The 68ers' conviction that they were ringing in a completely new era must have seemed somewhat ridiculous in the eyes of the rational older generation, which did exist. They kept their distance, understandably.

**VI. Because of these shortcomings, the majority of 68er texts are historically untenable.** In contrast to the European era of early modernity with its plethora of books, the *moment of 68* didn't produce any surviving theoretical writings of its own, and only two in the 70s — Alice Schwarzer's *Small Difference (Der kleiner Unterschied)* and *Male Fantasies (Männerphantasien)*. It is no coincidence that both of these are gender-related, as this was truly virgin territory.

This is not necessarily a negative result. It actually illustrates one of the central aspects of 68 which is almost always overlooked — not only did people accept the fact that the impact of their events would be short-lived, they actually *wanted and accepted the fleeting nature* of these events. The goal of 68 was *not* to produce something permanent for history, but rather to produce a charged *moment*. Fidel Castro's «History Will Absolve Me» speech before a court in Havana truly had a ridiculous character — «a great leader speaks». That's not how we spoke (including Dutschke — at least in my opinion).

Perhaps it was foreseeable that an old, inveterate literary maniac like Peter Rühmkorf would come out of the woodwork with his *Diaries* at the end of the millennium. Diary, in German «*Tagebuch*», shortened to «TABU» (taboo). The title proclaimed the «breaking of», but also continued a long tradition — Goethe and Eckermann in first person. The TABU paper established *the writer* as a character larger than life. For me, this kind of self-made image of *the author* as the *great individual* cast upon the backdrop of *eternity* had become *obsolete* in the af-

termth of the 68 upheaval. *68* was said and written to the last word by all the TABU writers of the Henry Miller generation. And then Gretchen Dutschke stepped out from behind the wings, holding her own TABU bundle of joy — her husband! The guy wrote diaries. What a sell-out! (fodder for my own sarcastic comments)

**VII. Maybe it's funny, and maybe not** — 68 wasn't about political theories — it was about the repeated attempt to venture into the unknown — to live in a different way, love in a different way, listen in a different way, see in a different way, know in a different way, talk in a different way. The problem was that no one knew exactly how to go about it. By revolutionizing things, yes, but no one had the faintest idea about how to do it a *different way*. *Love* in a different way? Where could you find out how? A few shy attempts on records, in cinemas. Godard's *Masculine Feminine* in 1966, Eustache's *La maman et la putain* in 1973 (The Mother and the Whore), the Beatles, *All You Need Is ...* but they had already called it quits by then. A few catchphrases, «Gentle with girls, brutal with cops». Great programme. It was probably pretty brutal in both cases. Who could tell or show them how to do things *differently*? A few kids their own age? Fortunately there were others who pursued the same goals at the same time with the same intensity. Spearheaded by literary authorities, the Wilhelm Reichs, Laings, Marcuses, Coopers whose «teachings» were put into practice or imitated. It wasn't immediately obvious who had tried — or experienced something — and who had only *imitated* something.

Sixty-eight brought about a conglomerate of new mundane problems. Many flat-shares suffered an early death because of the dilemma of how to fairly divide the available money each person had at their disposal. Or — how *open* was a flat supposed to be? Open to every (supposed) apprentice passing through (spy?), friend, or commonplace thief who stole away at the break of dawn? Practical questions. How does one live a different life, have different friends, different lovers, different *children*? You make rules, rules for living, codes, which were violated the second they were imposed. Rules put into place by democratic vote without the ability to enforce sanctions. «There is no communism. We have to make due with anarchy» (wall slogan).

*Experience* itself was a forbidden word, put into quarantine not only in R. D. Brinkmann's furious tirades against the key word used by the older generation to shield itself — *life experience*. It was the word that held their mountain of lies together, their impudent advice to simply follow their example (kindly disregarding Auschwitz, of course, which they didn't know about anyway). A bunch of honest dupes. Their *experience!* How they had loved Hitler and didn't know what was going on. Bullshit. Live in a different way? You had to invent it first, either with someone else or in groups. A fragile state — you could look at it empathetically, or as a farce. The most farcical aspect of all — the experts *left* the books and materialized as real, authoritative comrades at the kitchen tables. Three, four Vietnams outside and one or two mega gurus inside every flat-share. *Hilarious!*

**VIII. One thousand and one nights of endless discussions,** drunken, smoky, smashed, before sinking into each other's arms in exhaustion — this is less farcical. It's the most beautiful and perhaps most suppressed memory of 68. When Ingmar Bergmann died a few months ago, the front page of the  *taz* ran a tribute to Bergmann, describing his film *Scenes from a Marriage* from 1973 as the «beginning» of all relationship discussions. The writer of the article couldn't have been more wrong. In 1972 the political groups in Germany had just decided to *end* the relationship discussions — relics of the student revolts — and start *getting down to business* in an orderly and disciplined fashion.

Life in contradiction, fuelled by constant discussions — that was 68. Lamently or manifestly authoritarian individuals preached the virtues of the anti-authoritarian man. Anti-authoritarian women reacted by throwing tomatoes. Women, who had just emancipated themselves as feminists, organized themselves into groups that were no less authoritarian than those of their male comrades toward whom they had become «tomatoes». There's hardly any way to look at this other than satirically, which comics artists like Seyfried have done so aptly.

Or — each is free to do as he/she wishes. Tomorrow morning, flyers *must* be distributed. There are volunteers who are not «flyer ready» in the morning. Flyers are handed out by those who *always do it*. Who can you really rely on? While trying to live, love, listen and see in a new way? A problem of 68? Don't make me laugh. But, for the first time, 68 in plain view. What is a «comrade», really? Someone who will go through fire and water for you (today) and stab you in the back (tomorrow) because he changed groups, associations, parties? It happened. It had to be dealt with. Definitely had something humorous. Or something sad. What is still most impressive today is the courage of 68. Everything happened with no consideration of the risk involved. The stakes — your own (shared) life. Life as if it ended at thirty.

To understand *its moment*, it's absolutely essential to describe 68 from its end, the beginning of the end, the first signs of collapse around 1970. Three years at full blast, a permanent tizzy, escape as a lifestyle. At the end of the 80s, I estimated that the average length of time people in a group could stand it and persevere was 2 to 3 years. That's when their frustration tolerance wore thin — individuals and groups *fragmented* and dispersed in a war of disintegration, resulting in the struggle for control of rental contracts, wrecked loves, personal and political exclusion, new promises, festering wounds. The women's groups weren't much different in terms of their length of activity (though I'm not familiar with the internal behaviour). Here's a question for today: Has anything changed in the *constancy* of personal behaviour, in the structure of reliability among individuals in political groups and in their relationships? Questions for non-satirists.

**IX. The awareness of its own transitory nature,** which was one of the key concepts of the 68er programmes, was evident in the voluntary disbanding of the SDS at the end of 1969. As the entire organization was explosively scattering in all directions, the overwhelming majority came to the conclusion: «This thing is *over* now. We hereby end it.» It's true that some people expected to build their future on the granite foundation of political parties. Others preferred to quote the Stones — *I've got no expectations, to pass through here again*. Or more succinctly, *Our love is like our music! It's here and then it's gone No Expectations*, 1968 (not everyone had a job lined up — that's a *total legend*.) The bass clarinet god Eric Dolphy put it in a similar way: *the music we play... it's in the air... and then you'll never hear it again...* at one of his last performances shortly before he joined the burnt-out, Black horn players on Mt. Olympus. But he was wrong. Somebody made a recording, somebody was always making recordings, the eternal recorder who fed music into *the archive*, insatiable archives which could preserve the music of the moment, but could never let it run wild. The overexertion, the self-consumption, the pulsating heart of 68, these are the things archives cannot hold on to. This is the hardest part for later generations to understand. *No one* believes 68 — this *let's shake things up, this feeling of a lost generation* (ha ha).

In contrast to Eric Dolphy, John Coltrane or Albert Ayler, the Stones didn't blow out their souls at the age of forty — they're still following their songs as close to the original as possible — *No Expectations!* — and they probably want to keep going until their eighty, building their own musical Pharaonic tomb. There are clearly some valid objections to *surviving*. Bob Dylan sang *I've got nothing, Ma, to live up to* in 1965, he sang it again in 1968, and he's probably still singing it today. And he's busy developing his projects, big ones. There are some people who were waist-high in terrorism or were wasting away in self-sacrifice who later became professors, reliable parents, and hell, even ministers of state. You can't help laughing about it.

At least 68 had a certain amount of self-irony. *Pigs* weren't always the others. Frank Zappa walked up onto the stage, opened his trousers and started his concert with the words «Greet you, pigs» (chorus of squeals from the auditorium). Fun guerrillas were better heirs than the Greens.

**X. Legends and false successions.** Sixty-eight was *not* the Greens. Sixty-eight was not only «non», but also anti-parliamentary. Anti-Stalinist, anti-Bolshevist. Soviet democracy! We didn't have the *industrial companies* as a field of praxis. And in the flat-shares? They provided the conditions for anarchic life with individual niches. A psycho-physical self-experiment without experiment supervision or data collection. Total hybrid. I can laugh with all those who laugh at it. Not laughing with Herr Westerwelle who would like to shove 68 into the same drawer as criminality and RAF.

From the point of view of 68, the fears concerning the fate of emancipative political groups in parliamentarianism have been confirmed. The irreconcilability of 68 with policies of the Red-Green parliamentary majority and government is nowhere more glaring than the Green foreign minister Fischer, who, according to his colleague Antje Vollmer — made the «clean-up crew» concept the principle for inner-party dialogue, who (without prior UN or NATO approval) joined in the bombing of Belgrade (which the Serbs regarded as a follow-up to the arbitrary bombardment of Belgrade by the Nazis in 1941) — this «clean-up crew» Fischer, who publicly and repeatedly defended his decision as an act to prevent a «second Auschwitz». As is so often the case, reality beats satire.

**XI. Today 68 is present** in forms which are *not* 68, in a rather calm, confident ordinariness. Dylan's *He not busy being born is busy dying* is still basically true, but *she* wouldn't put it that way. Was born again and is not alone.

I recently read something by Noam Chomsky, one of those unbroken leftist thinkers who hasn't forgotten that Stalin, Lenin and Trotsky were enemies of socialism: «Anarchism — at least as I understand it — is a movement that tries to identify organizations exerting authority and domination, to ask them to justify their actions and, if they are unable to do so, as often happens, to try to supersede them.» A little awkwardly formulated, but definitely viable as a programme. He sees anarchism heading in the right direction in the world today. «Forms of oppression and injustice that were once barely recognized, less still disputed, are no longer allowed.» If enough people do what they can to prevent these forms of oppression from being allowed, then we can all forget 68 — it *channels* itself into new states of being. That's exactly what we were trying to achieve all along.

Klaus Theweleit is a writer, professor of Art and Theory at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe, lecturer at the Institute of Sociology at the Universität Freiburg im Breisgau, and guest lecturer at numerous universities in Germany, the United States, Switzerland and Austria. His two books *Male Fantasies Vol. 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History* (Frankfurt a. M. 1977) and *Male Fantasies Vol. 2: Male Bodies Psychoanalyzing the White Terror* (Frankfurt a. M. 1978) were a sweeping success. Since then Theweleit has written and published numerous articles and essays. In 2003 Theweleit received the Johann Heinrich Merck Prize for literary criticism and essays. His most recent book, *absolute(y) Sigmund Freud Songbook*, was published in Freiburg in 2006.

# PORTENTS OF CHANGE?

For most people in East and West Germany, the political upheaval in autumn 1989 came as a big surprise. Apparently no one had seen it coming. When we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2009, the impression and mythos of this historical surprise will have faded even more. In its place, historians will have sharpened their view of the subtle tremors which led to the sudden tectonic shift in political thinking. The Federal Cultural Foundation has developed a programme of cultural projects titled *Deutschland 2009* marking the commemorative year of German unification. One of these projects is a film programme in search of the *Portents of Change* in East German and Eastern European films of the 1980s. The film scholar Rainer Rother describes the background, material and goals of this cinematic retrospective.

BY  
RAINER  
ROTHER

**1** «The Change» — An Unforeseen Shift  
In 1988 the great British historian Hugh R. Trevor-Roper held an inspiring lecture on the «lost moments of crisis in history». He was referring to developments that cause a fundamental change in the course of history — moments in history when everything could have turned out differently. He cited the example of Germany after 1945 to illustrate the unique combination of various factors that can radically alter a stable construct and the course of development that led up to it. «If the division in opposing political systems continues and the ideological motives of division stand the test of time and finally have a structural weight of their own — who can say that Germany's division will not have the same permanence as that of Holland in the 16th century? For this is exactly how nation states and their borders have been created over time.»

The magazine *Merkur* published this brilliant text in West Germany in August 1989. If conditions remained the same, one could presume that two separate and very different German states could evolve — an intellectual supposition that was completely in line with the discourse of the day. «The Germans in the West were not prepared for reunification and didn't expect it — strangely enough, in 1989 less than ever before.» (Dietrich Thränhardt). But when Trevor-Roper's article appeared in *Merkur*, when Germans had seemed to resign themselves to their two-nation fate, the wheels of change were already moving.

It is easy to criticize the general inability to recognize what was happening at the time. The moments of crisis in history are unexpected upheavals, and the factors that contribute to them are not always apparent. This is why contemporary witnesses reacted so ecstatically to the radical changes to the status quo. In the December 1989 issue of *Merkur*, Karl Heinz Bohrer began his editorial with the anonymous quote: «That's history, man!» He was right — everything was amazing and unbelievable. The East Berliners pouring through the hole in the Wall into West Berlin and the wide-eyed West Berliners cheering the endless convoy of «Trabis» had the same word on their lips — «*Wahnsinn*» (crazy). It was the expression of joy — caused not so much by the fulfilment of expectations, but the recognition of something long absent from the daily agenda of history — the abrupt end of movement, of a dynamic process, a free fall into post-history. The fall of the Wall heralded a new epoch of history.

Historians can easily explain the revolution in retrospect. They can more clearly recognize the factors that led to the collapse of the Soviet system. Economic and ecological crises, the system's lack of credibility and loss of moral standing — of these have has been bundled together as causes. However, historical research has hardly addressed the surprising nature of these changes which contemporary witnesses described as having come as a complete surprise with dynamics unlike anything they had ever experienced. Historians have seen no need to explain the comments by those who experienced the events first hand, who often described them as being wonderfully crazy — an absolutely unanticipated upheaval of a situation that was long believed to be rigid and unchanging. The echoes of astonishment can still be heard in the reports by asylum seekers at the embassies, the demonstration of tens of thousands, the opening of the border and the fall of the Wall. People are still keenly aware of the important lesson of those years: that a development, which no one had dared predict, could turn the usual conditions of political life upside-down practically overnight.

In the years and months prior to autumn 1989, hardly anyone imagined the socialistic system was to become obsolete any time soon. However, some claimed they could identify clues of hidden processes of change in socialistic societies — signs that could help them better understand these societies, give them an idea of how large the dynamic processes were and indicate the direction they were moving. These signs were found in films produced in the Eastern Bloc and presented at festivals in Moscow, Karlovy Vary and Leipzig. According to Siegfried Krauer, due to the specific division of labour in their production, films could not so much reflect «explicit convictions as they could psychological dispositions». And if this were true, then there was a good chance of finding traces of developing upheavals in these new films. These did not initially apply to the system in a fundamental way, but

reacted to its obvious weaknesses. It was then possible to interpret the signs even further depending on how they were expressed in the films.

## **2** Traces of Change in Film **a** «Perestroika films»

The discussions at the fifth annual filmmaking congress in the Soviet Union in spring 1986 resulted in significant changes in previous production practices. It was now possible to produce films with themes that were previously taboo. The first of these «perestroika films» featured the belated release of «shelved films», such as Aleksandr Askoldov's *Komissar* (1967) and Aleksei German's *Checkpoint* (1971), and were followed by new films by well-known directors (Kira Muratova, Sergei Solovjev) and young filmmakers (Aleksandr Sokurov, Vasily Pičul, the Aleinikov brothers). One of the problematic areas of socialistic life — the Stalinist past — had long been omitted from cinematic treatment, but now took centre-stage. Filmmakers began experimenting with new forms, marked by an unusual intensity and radicalness and a cinematic language that was symbolic, realistic and even grotesque. With remarkable honesty, the new films started portraying sexuality, fringe existences and crime — often in a speculative manner. There was a period when documentary films attracted surprisingly large audiences. «For a brief time, the ability to freely express one's opinions and portray events in a variety of ways allowed documentary films to be more than a «mirror» — they became a motor of change.» (Christine Engel, History of Soviet and Russian Film, 1999)

## **b** Documentary films

Similar developments took place in other countries of Eastern Europe, and in some cases, began even earlier. Although the national filmmaking industries were still impeded by censorship and harassment (and most severely in the GDR), one can say that a «wave» of critical productions was forming. In a very short time, they created a new image of socialistic societies — more contradictory, sharper and harsher than in previous decades.

One can identify a general change in many of these films. It's not that they showed the days of the old guard coming to an end. If these films actually reflected the demise of a political and economic system, then it certainly wasn't in the form of a countdown. Noticing a change — even one that points to the conclusion of something — doesn't entail predicting the exact course it will take. Despite increasing censorship and harassment, new films were produced which, like seismographs, were highly sensitive and indicated that something was happening.

Documentaries were the first films that focused on society in a new way and with heightened clarity. In a review for the magazine *Sonntag* of the 1987 Leipzig Festival, Jutta Voigt claimed, «the films were more unconventional, less one-sided, and above all, there was more honesty in their depiction of the problems in socialistic countries». The movement that seemed to have entered socialistic filmmaking had also taken hold of the socialistic societies. Some film reviews hinted at this: «We all know from newspaper reports, especially those about court cases, that aggression, alcoholism, people's loss of faith in the meaning of work also exist under socialistic conditions. Yet seldom have films addressed these issues» (Jutta Voigt). A few years earlier, it wouldn't have been possible to make films like *Is it easy to be young?* by Juri Podnieks (1986), which depicts the disillusionment of youth in the Soviet Union. These films were now being made, and the stories they told could no longer be denied.

However, it was quite difficult and even prohibited to speak about the real problems in socialistic society. Not all critical documentaries were allowed to be shown to their target audiences — especially in the GDR. For instance, Volker Koepp's film study *Feuerland* (1987) received permission to be shown at the national festival in Neubrandenburg, but not in Leipzig. A year later, *Märkische Ziegel* (1988/89) was banned outright — the scenes from Zehdenick were too controversial even for the censors. It showed workers complaining about the idiotic decision to ban the Soviet magazine *Sputnik* and discussing the «new thinking» that was currently being propagated in the Soviet Union. Perhaps the censors also took offense at the images of the Zehdenick brick factory, which still used machines from the end of the 19th century. The UNESCO symbol for historical landmarks was suggestive of the extremely anachronistic situation that was prevalent in socialistic

society. The need to reform the system from within was also visible in the workers' resignation as they described the desolate condition of the shower and sanitary rooms, which had never been renovated though they'd complained about them for years.

However, the GDR also allowed films to be shown at the documentary film festival in Leipzig, which openly addressed major problems. In Heinz Klunker's review in the *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*, Gitta Nickel's *Wenn man eine Liebe hat* (1987) provided «insights into industrial life beyond socialistic mythologization which broke the pattern and depicted at least a somewhat accurate image of reality. Apparently some administrators thought it went too far — which says more about their narrow-mindedness than the quality of the film.» Works like Heike Misselwitz's *Winter Ade*, which won the Silver Dove in Leipzig in 1988, finally established a new form of perception. In *Sonntag*, Jutta Voigt wrote: «Frenetically received in Leipzig, the applause was meant for the film as well as its just treatment of reality, fearless. This was it, the convincing example of a new social sensitivity, something that satisfied the desire for truthfulness, and also the desire for carefully administered doses of impiety.»

## **C** Eastern European film

Along with documentaries, the crisis of these years was addressed in feature films, as well. While some relied on a comparatively realistic or even conventional narration, like Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Short Film about Killing* (1987) or Vasily Pičul's *Little Vera* (1988), others told stories of distress. «Distress» was a programmatic theme in the newly emerging alternative film productions of the USSR, such as the grotesque «parallel cinema» that called into question everything that seemed set in stone — realistic storytelling and the belief in utopia. Highly symbolic films, like Konstantin Lopuschanski's *The Museum Visitor* (1989), were also disturbing in a different way, confusing viewers with metaphorical overload and a narrative line marked by hopelessness. At the time, Lopuschanski's film was not regarded so much as a symptom of irreparable decay, but rather as being overly exaggerated and pessimistic in its methods.

## **3** Cinematic Retrospective — Portents of Change?

In the first years following the revolutionary changes of 1989, many people remembered the events as coming as a complete surprise. Later it became known that even the secret services hadn't been able to correctly assess the dynamics of the situation nor predict where it was going. The political upheaval was followed by an especially critical evaluation of the artworks in the former GDR. In reference to the East German filmmaking industry, critics claimed that the DEFA hadn't produced anything that adequately portrayed the hard facts about socialistic life, nor did any investigative work to speak of. Basically, many people were of the opinion that films produced before 1989 were blind to the reality of the GDR, at best, presenting the facts in a favourable light, and at worst, construing them in clearly ideological terms.

## OTHER PROJECTS IN DEUTSCHLAND 2009

The Federal Cultural Foundation is participating in the commemorative year 2009 with two large projects of its own. These projects also focus on artists and their role as chroniclers, commentators and critics of German-German contemporary history. They reveal the connections between art, culture, science, politics and the public domain which characterized the culture(s) of the divided and now united Germany. The theatre project *60 Years in Germany* is one of the many projects supported by the Federal Cultural Foundation's General Project Funding department.

germany — reinvented  
Literary-artistic montage of sixty years of German post-war history  
Audio-book edition, radio series marking the 60th anniversary of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Between the end of World War II and the end of the 1960s, radio was the most important mass media form in Germany. It highlighted the significant issues of the day and influenced the critical cultural discourse, process of democratization and cultural life in Germany. Radio plays were particularly influential. Many famous German authors wrote radio plays — a form that allowed them to combine literary traditions with new acoustic experimentation. As radio features developed into an independent art form, writers soon made forays into other genres which initiated a productive dialogue between acoustic art, literature and music. In cooperation with the Hörverlag and the Bavarian and Hessian broadcasting companies, the Federal Cultural Foundation has initiated an audio-book edition that will re-examines the cultural heritage of radio archives and enable listeners to acoustically relive 60 years of German history through the voices of authors, composers and artists. A documentary and literary perspective will be used for the compilation and presentation of the extraordinary wealth of acoustic material. The project will make live recordings, speeches, essays, features and collages accessible again, all of which reflect the cultural and social debates of their time and illustrate the development of artistic innovations in music and radio art. The audio-book edition, comprised of 20 CDs (total running time: 24 hours), will be released in May 2009.

But there was also evidence that «all this» could someday fall apart — evidence that may have seemed insignificant, or was concealed or forbidden. It could have also been «overlooked» — simply not perceived due to the precision of the diagnosis. The signs may have not been obvious, but they were there — inscribed in cinematic images. There were films that confronted society with the virtue of close observation or portrayed its condition metaphorically — a portrayal that had nothing in common with the official version of the state of affairs. These films did not predict a political «change» as such, but they did show that the status quo was no longer viable.

The project *Portents of Change?* examines the often forgotten films from Eastern Europe, the GDR and FRG produced prior to the political upheaval of 1989. The project will safeguard and produce subtitled copies of outstanding examples of this unique body of works which includes feature films, documentaries, experimental movies and underground films. The curatorial goal is to create a film series comprised of approximately 15 programmes, all of which will be shown for the first time at a German film festival, followed by presentations at various German and selected Eastern European cinemas. In negotiation with those who own the film rights, the project also aims to ensure that these films can be shown in Germany in the long term. The *Deutsche Kinemathek — Museum für Film und Fernsehen* has agreed to include these films in their archive. The German subtitles will help make the films accessible to general audiences in Germany, and in cooperation with *Vision Kino*, parts of the programme will be available to schools nationwide.

Rainer Rother, born in 1956, has taught Film Studies in Hannover, Hildesheim and Saarbrücken and published numerous articles on German and international film history. Rother was the programme director of the Zeughaus cinema at the German Historical Museum and an exhibition curator in Berlin. In April 2006, he became the director of the *Deutschen Kinemathek — Museum für Film und Fernsehen*, which was commissioned by the Federal Cultural Foundation to create a film retrospective in cooperation with *Vision Kino* and the *Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAPF)*.

berlin history forum 2009  
The Revolution of 1989 — Closing the chapter on German and European division  
International forum for scientists, artists, politicians, media representatives and the public in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the peaceful revolution  
In cooperation with the German Federal Agency of Civic Education, the Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship, the Centre for Contemporary History Research Potsdam and the Institute of Contemporary History Munich, the Federal Cultural Foundation is organizing a history forum in Berlin that will last for several days in early summer 2009. The forum will focus on the peaceful revolutions of 1989/90 in Germany and Eastern Europe and examine their reception in literature, theatre, art, music, the media, political education and science.

60 years in germany  
Warming up to an uncomfortable identity  
Theatre project  
Artistic director: Thomas Ostermeier | dramaturgy: Jens Hillje | Writers: Oliver Bukowski, Simon Froehling (CH), David Giesemann, Kristof Magnusson, Dorota Maslowska (PL), Marius von Mayenburg, Mark Ravenhill (GB), Falk Richter, Rafael Spregelburd (RA), Gerhild Steinbuch (A) and others | Directors: Benedict Andrews (AUS), Dominic Cooke (GB), Grzegorz Jarzyna (PL), Sebastian Nübling, Thomas Ostermeier, Falk Richter, Rafael Spregelburd (RA) and others | Venue and schedule: Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz Berlin; 1 August 2007 – 31 July 2009

The Schaubühne in Berlin is developing an extensive programme on German post-war history together with young writers. The programme will consist of a series of new «mini dramas», a comedy competition and other commissioned works. The readings and performances at the Schaubühne will be supplemented by a theme-based weekend and festival.

# FORGET THE PAST, PROUST

BY  
MARCEL  
BEYER

Later, when they were sitting together, talking about post-war times, the years that flowed gently into the reconstruction period and far into the 1950s, a time they talked about more often the older we got since it overlapped with our youth. Klara sat nearby, usually very quiet, which really wasn't like her. When they rolled out their memories, when they helped each other recall names, years and places, Klara got quiet. They laughed, argued, interrupted each other, no one noticed, but I could see that Klara felt uncomfortable. It seemed like she was hardly paying attention, lost in thought. While everyone else was listening intently, one outdoing another with details even more precise, with a story even more astounding, Klara remained impassive as if she were trying to stay out of an unpleasant situation.

This was strange because there was no danger that they'd spend an entire evening reminiscing about «Leopek» mosquito repellent, «Fleischfrost» frozen foods or movies like «Mazurka of Love». Nobody ever talked about the «Savings Weeks», there was never a glowing «Working Hands Are Happy Hands», and no patina-coated «oat motors» which they could have slipped into their stories about the rubble clean-up. Klara didn't have to listen to Leo the Lion say «Let's Rebuild Dresden!» or have someone remind her that «The Enemy is Among Us». Nonetheless, she couldn't stand these evenings.

One time when we were visiting some acquaintances of ours, Klara left the group for a half an hour and waited out in the hall — which, in her eyes, was the height of impoliteness — until they were finished talking about the 17th of June, 1953. Later she said that she couldn't simply enter the room until every last guest had relieved themselves of their memories on this subject. She had been standing within hearing range the whole time, a few feet from the door, somewhat dazed, leaning back against the bookcase, physically sickened by the memory-laden air in the parlour.

One of them told the story of how he was just leaving a bakery on Wasaplatz when demonstrators from Neidersedlitz marched by, and how he joined them, armed with a bag of rolls, and walked all the way downtown. Another claimed he had marched alongside the strike leader Grothaus, and a third recited long passages of the famous strike speech that he had learned by heart. With each image, the events became clearer to them until finally they all remembered how they had met each other among the crowds at the Postplatz around noontime. There was a moment of silence as everyone watched the events play out in their minds, and that's when Klara reappeared in the doorway. No one had seen her leave the room, no one had noticed her absence.

On our way home — a short time later — I couldn't get much more out of Klara except that she couldn't stand listening to the stories, the way they told them as if the memories could give them something to hold on to, though the opposite was true, that looking back could only terrify us and would knock our present lives out of joint.

«We all have our own nightmares — no matter what people say,» she explained so that we could finally change the subject. Then she added, «We've all made mistakes, every one of us, and I'm definitely no exception.»

If it looked like the conversation would wander down memory lane for the rest of the evening, Klara usually found a way to excuse herself without embarrassing the host. She was exhausted after a long day, had a long way home, felt a cold coming. If she didn't have the strength to come up with a believable excuse, she'd make a sign that we ought to be going, and I'd think of something, seek refuge in an excursion for which I'd have to get up before dawn to watch the birds. In this way we could always get ourselves out of an engagement discreetly.

If there was no possibility of escape, and they started asking Klara about how she remembered the 1950s, she categorically insisted that the only thing she could recall was that «Proust» came out in German. She sounded tired when she said this, no brazen tone in her voice, no spark of fight, «Just Proust, that's it». The stories simply made her weary.

The first time she said this, she surprised me as much as the others in the group. Even though I couldn't detect a sparkle in her eye, I wasn't sure whether she was joking or not. A dry, dark, sinister joke, because I knew what memories were tied to the fifties for Klara, for both Klara and me.

For those who didn't realize how she despised the conversation, Klara would describe how she acquired the volumes with their sandy-grey dust jackets. She bought one when she was visiting West Berlin, another was lying on the table one birthday morning, two more came in a package which Klara believed to contain canned meat. «Proust» — that's what she remembered of the fifties, Klara only talked about «Proust», for her there was no «Captive», no «Fugitive» and no «Time Regained».

If they were still unsatisfied, Klara would claim it was mainly the famous scene in which the narrator washes his hands that helped her through the entire «Proust», yes, the first detailed hand-washing scene in the novel enabled her to fully understand this literary masterpiece. The lukewarm water in the enamelled bowl, the grandmother checking its temperature once more — or was it the servant — before the narrator was allowed to dip his tender, waxy fingers into it, the scent of soap, the suds, the left hand cupped in the right, and the whole time, the boy gazing out the window with an amazed look in his eye before being called to dinner.

The conversation wandered to the time following Stalin's death, touched on the Secret Speech, moved to the Doctors Trials and back to Slansky, and Klara shuddered. It wouldn't be long before they expected her to contribute something. She felt their stares, felt she needed to cause a diversion, listened carefully until she heard a cue, the perfect cue — later no one would have been able to say how she so elegantly changed the subject.

After that first big hand-washing scene, Klara couldn't wait for the next short but tender scene where they talked about that simple routine of personal hygiene, asides, minor characters, one of countless evenings in the parlour, and someone leaves the room briefly to wash his hands — such fleeting moments which the reader has to imagine himself if he truly wishes to seize them — that was perhaps the whole secret of «Proust». For example, before the painter greets the narrator who unexpectedly shows up at the studio, why, Klara asked, does the painter spit on his paint-smeared hands and wipe them on a rag instead of using turpentine?

And what's the meaning of that scene when Odette, following an evening of merriment, allows Swann to take her through the streets of Paris in his carriage — why isn't the coachman there, why don't we see him dutifully climbing down from his box to open the carriage door as soon as Swann and Odette step onto the street? Instead, he appears from behind the horses, embarrassed, and mumbles something, his master does not deign look at him, the coachman works all the harder to be obliging. Odette and Swann only have eyes for each other, the coachman clasps his hands behind his back, and as they get in, he acts as if he doesn't want to touch the door handle, and we, the readers, are the only ones who notice that Swann's coachman in this scene — for whatever reason — is not wearing gloves as he swings the door shut. What was he mumbling for an excuse, we ask ourselves, didn't he say something about a «chance to wash», and something else about «quickly» and «unfortunately» and «in vain»?

And didn't that phrase come up in this scene, too, the phrase Klara stumbled on, something like «little dirtiness», didn't Swann's coachman mumble «just a little dirtiness»? A baffling phrase for any reader. Was Proust using a servant's expression, was it perhaps an example of argot? No, it sounded too refined — most likely it was mistranslated. No one could help Klara with this problem.

They remembered anxious nights huddled around the radio, tanks rolling through Budapest and grotesquely contorted corpses strewn across the torn-up pavement — which gave Klara the cue she needed to steer away from the oncoming question if she — yes, we did — also spent sleepless nights huddled around the radio. But with a few simple sentences, she moved from the pavement in Budapest — or was it Prague? — to the uneven pavement stones over which Proust's narrator tripped on his way to an evening engagement. Wasn't he thinking about when he last washed his hands and wouldn't it be prudent to find a washroom before greeting his hostess? A moment of indecision, hesitation, we feel the quiet approach of one of those detailed reflections that constantly freeze our hero in the flow of events, when sud-

denly he happens to stub his toe on a stone. His hands, his feet, the focus of attention takes a jump, one distraction replaces another, and we find ourselves stumbling into the middle of the famous description of an involuntary memory.

They spent some time talking of events in the closer vicinity, the demolition of the war ruins at the Rampische Gasse in 1956 where many of the buildings could have been saved, or Professor Manfred von Ardenne and the Dresdener Club which he founded in spring 1957, or the «Club of Intelligence», as it was later called — Klara replied that she could remember a brief moment, embedded within a remark, that gave the impression that a bunch of girls were bending down on the beach at Balbec, as if on cue and only for two or three seconds, with their backs to the promenade, to the viewer, as if those four girls — indecent behaviour in public — wanted to let the seawater wash over their hands at least once in their lifetime. Everything happens in the distance, the gentle waves, the salty smell, the taste, a dab of starfish and clams. You do a double-take and look again at the waves rolling back, but the girls have continued their afternoon walk as if nothing had happened. You can't even be sure whether the narrator noticed what happened, and so you're left alone with the question of how four elegant young ladies could all have dirty hands at the same time — no, could even have dirty hands at all, maybe the sand, sticky sweets, maybe they touched girlskin — or boyskin.

Klara was certain that people would willingly follow her after such a remark, which brought her to the strange passage in «Proust» in which the narrator secretly observes a stranger washing his hands. The scene takes place during the First World War, one of the few Parisian scenes of that time, the sirens could start wailing any moment, another artillery attack is imminent, but the narrator lies patiently in wait, peering through a partially-opened window into a dark room across the courtyard, perhaps into a hallway, where a young man wearing an undershirt appears, closes the door behind him and succumbs to the urge to hold his hands beneath the nearest faucet. A battered washbasin normally used to fill up mopping buckets, no towel, no soap, but the man in the undershirt obviously wasn't able to wait until he found a washroom.

«There's something obscene about it,» Klara told me once. It was after she had made one of her Proust remarks and they had left her alone for the rest of the evening to return to their own anecdotes of their youth. «I can't stand it. Something obscene, but also pathetic, this grim determination wrapped up in light conversation, as if by talking about the past, they could restore their innocence.»

Klara couldn't bear the heaviness of the stories, that's the only way I can explain it. This heaviness that lessens the longer a story is turned this way and that, the more details that come to light, so that finally in hindsight it seems that a strange web of coincidences lie behind every tragic event. But because I know the dark expression in her face when she sits at the kitchen table for days, and because I know the dread in her eyes when I entered the room and caught her off guard once, Klara never had to explain why she always used «Proust» to talk her way out of remembering.

Marcel Beyer, born in Taillfingen/Württemberg in 1965, now lives in Dresden. He became well-known with his novels *Das Menschenfleisch* (1991) and *Flughunde* (1995). His first volume of poetry, *Falsches Futter*, was published in 1997. Marcel Beyer has received a number of awards and prizes, such as the Johannes Bobrowski Medal for the Berlin Literature Prize in 1996 and the Uwe Johnson Prize in 1997. His most recent publications include the novel *Splione* (2000), the volume of essays *Nonfiction* (2002) and the volume of poetry *Erikunde* (2002).

The «culture of memory» is one of the central themes in the German-Hungarian cultural projects *Bipolar*. The project *Creative Forgetting* has compiled texts by six German and six Hungarian writers who address the social taboos in the process of forgetting. This issue features two of these — a story by the German writer Marcel Beyer and an essay by the Hungarian László Márton (see p. 14/15), both of which were written for this *Bipolar* project and will appear in Issue 183 of the magazine *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* (Language in the Age of Technology) in September 2007.

# DON'T FORGET WHAT YOU PROMISED!

BY  
LÁSZLÓ  
MÁRTON

It's good to forget. Or rather, it can be good to forget sometimes. The process of forgetting can free us from mental or emotional pressure. It can allow our imagination to run wild and remove the obstacles blocking new and important insights. Forgetting misfortune can provide happiness. Forgetting happiness can also give us happiness — albeit a different, smaller kind of happiness, because what we forget is actually the awareness of loss.

Somebody once told me about a woman who had perfected the ability to forget love affairs. Whenever a man disappointed her, she wrote his name on a piece of paper, ripped it up and flushed it down the toilet. This is how she was able to forget the man she loved, for whom she would have jumped out the window a few seconds earlier.

I also heard about a man who was said to be very discreet because he could keep secrets. In fact, he had no secrets to keep because he simply forgot what he wasn't supposed to tell.

Or we could take the example of that story by Anatole France, in which Pontius Pilate was able to remember every single person and moment in his life, except for Jesus.

Then there are forms of forgetting that are caused by increasing knowledge. In science and its various branches, forgetting is happening faster than ever. I'm not a scientist, but I have friends who are. They frequently complain that it's almost impossible to keep up with the newest research in even the most specific fields. Often I hear them say things like: what's true today, you can (or have to) forget tomorrow. I get the impression — if it's at all possible to assess the situation as a non-expert — that the more diversified the natural sciences become, the more they lose contact with their own history. Forgetting is not only the result of the rapid increase of new findings, but also by the fragmentation of knowledge.

I believe this is especially true of brain research which, among other things, attempts to shed light on the physiological processes of memory.

Philosophy, however, at least in my opinion, seems to be dominated by the reflection of the individual which leads to an irresolvable dilemma. The history of philosophy cannot separate itself from the problems of its individual thinkers as easily as the natural sciences, in which researchers in certain fields have chosen to close their eyes to their recent and ancient history. (The scientific-historic reconstruction — see Feyrabend's Menippean satire with Galileo as the protagonist or Koestler's fantastic novel «The Sleepwalkers» about a braggart named Kopermikus and a daredevil named Kepler — is interesting from an ethical and historic-philosophical point of view and is certainly worth contemplating).

Although forgetting might be inherently connected to the development of knowledge, it is not necessarily productive. Along with a history of the world's inventions and discoveries, one could also write a history of the world's forgotten innovations and lost arts. In the third volume of Johann Beckmann's monumental work on the history of inventions from 1792, there are hundreds of materials, tools and processes which are only mentioned in footnotes today — if at all — because the following generations failed to propagate them. They obviously didn't feel they needed these objects and clever processes. We, on the other hand, cannot judge the usefulness of these forgotten inventions because they no longer exist. (Even Polydorus Vergilius and Theophilus Presbyter weren't familiar with most of them, though they were familiar with almost everything in the world.)

The typewriter with its metal type bars which I'm using right now (my brain shuts down in front of a computer screen — total writer's block), in twenty, thirty years, no one will be able to repair this young, tame little sister of a Roman war machine, and when the typewriter disappears, people will forget the clackity-clack that echoed in publishing and editorial rooms just a century before.

In one or two generations, nobody will remember what it means to print with monotype or linotype machines. Antiquarian bookshops will be the only place where one will be able to find books set in this manner — the set types will have long been discarded. The hot metal type will be forgotten. And very slowly, people will forget how to write by hand, or perhaps they will push it to the wayside. The culture of calligraphy is something that is currently being forgotten. It reached its heyday in the 19th century and separated the writing experts from the scribbling masses. Even the vulgarization of handwriting — which is a process that will take centuries and began here in Hungary with the so-called «Sütterlin writing» during Horthy's regime — will also be forgotten sooner or later, and graphology, formerly an organic area of living knowledge, will eventually be demoted to an auxiliary science.

Black and white photos printed on paper — an absolutely normal article of everyday life during my childhood, will become as much of an oddity in coming years as daguerreotype is today. With its banishment to the museums, people will also forget how photography significantly influenced and democratized our view of the world for an entire century. The photo as such signifies an object-oriented and architectural culture which would have long been forgotten without it and will be lost as the photo disappears. (Digital photography is, of course, a marvellous thing, but it signifies the present. It cannot show, express or preserve that which a black and white paper photo can show, express and preserve).

People will someday forget the record player and those black, finely-grooved records. The 33-speeds will be remembered a bit longer than the 78s, but that doesn't matter. People will forget copying music by hand, sending express letters, telegrams delivered in envelopes and the mini-dramas they caused. The telegraph delivery boy has a striking resemblance with the pizza delivery boy except for the fact that the telegraph delivery boys used to read the telegram beforehand to calculate the size of the tip. And even these parallels will be forgotten.

People will forget how life used to be before today's services and modern conveniences became widespread. How it was, for example, fifteen or twenty years ago, when people couldn't simply use a mobile phone to arrange dates, clear up misunderstandings or locate their loved ones wherever they happened to be. Or take the Hungarian saying that «the tantus has dropped». <sup>1</sup> People still occasionally say it, but the «tantus» with its postal emblem — a coin used to operate the old public telephones — has long faded into oblivion. There is a more recent variation of the same saying, «the twenty fillers have dropped», which refers to the twenty-filler coin used to operate the public scales with which people could weigh themselves on the street. If they haven't already, people will soon forget these scales along with the twenty-filler coins adorned with those three stylized wheat heads.

Ravaged landscapes, demolished buildings, meals which no one knows how to make anymore — all forgotten. Languages are lost in a similar way — when the last native speakers pass away, the language dies, but it can also happen the other way around or hand-in-hand. We forget people who were close to us, and we forget *how* close they were. «I'll never forget you!» actually means that I've already forgotten you, and this feeling or moment is eventually forgotten, as well.

We even forget ourselves. Or in other words, we forget who we are. We forget important episodes of our lives, our achievements and our suffering. We forget the goals we used to have, and principles (if we had ever had any), our traits (if we had ever recognized them as such), our former opinions and past mistakes. The person we are today forgets the person we used to be who was less experienced, less worn out, and perhaps a little less corrupt.

I knew a man who confessed to his wife of having an affair three times within five years — it was the same affair, he had simply forgotten that he had already confessed it.

I knew a man who forgot to admit that he had been an informant for the secret police. He actually forgot that he had ever been an informant and stated with incredible sincerity that he had never been one and was genuinely insulted when somebody reminded him of his forgetfulness.

I knew a man, a public figure, who announced to a large audience that he had never lied. For one thing, he had forgotten his lies and, for another, he had forgotten the difference between lying and telling the truth, and then he encouraged his followers to forget this trivial distinction as quickly as possible.

My question, therefore, is what do we expect from the various abysses, niches and sectors of historic and cultural memory? What will we actually see if we focus on our so-called common past, our nice, little pink-fingered past?

Ladies and gentlemen, I am a writer, a storyteller. In the past fifteen years, I've written historical novels — difficult, serious, thick books. For years I've been sitting in libraries and archives to get acquainted with my protagonists, the material and the circumstances of times immemorial. I read over historical-philosophic works and other theoretical treatises to get a better idea of certain basic questions I had. I met with historians and other experts, not only to collect data and information, but to find out whether I was the only one who harboured serious doubts about our small, adorable past.

While I was writing, I kept a diary. I addressed questions and thoughts that came up in my essays, articles and reviews. And while I was closely

<sup>2</sup> The Civic Freedom Party (Hungarian: *Polgári Szabadságpárt*) was the last name of one of the two interbellum liberal parties in Hungary.

following the methods of portraying historical memory in Hungarian novels, I also learned one or two things about our Hungarian literary tradition — our nice little tradition.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to briefly summarize my results after one and a half decades of painstaking work — we will see nothing. Or to put it more cautiously and vaguely — almost nothing.

I do not claim that those who embrace this view are automatically crazy, blind or stupid. On the contrary, the mere intention shows favourably on their faculty of perception, yes, even their moral standing. The real problem is that the experiences of historic or cultural memory cannot apply to everyone. Any representative statement that begins with the first person plural, that little word «we», is nothing but a blatant lie. Let me put it another way — «we» is a magic word for collective amnesia. And as an amusing aside, remembering those frightening weeks last autumn, I would add that amnesia and amnesty were never as fundamentally and brutally related as they were then.

Today in Hungary, amnesia means that every single person, even those with the same political orientation who belong to the same Indian tribe, has a different regard and interpretation of people and events of the past. Amnesty, on the other hand, might best be described with Mihály Babit's suggestion he made following World War I: «Don't keep asking about guilt, let's plant flowers.» Asking about guilt, however, has become impossible in Hungary following the traumatic experiences of the past century. Instead of reminding each other to forgive, we live in a state of vengeful amnesia, in which the little word «we» can refer to each and every one of us.

Now that we are remembering beyond the scope of our personal memory, we should first ask ourselves on whose behalf we can use the word «we» and in which cases we ought to avoid it. A nation is comprised of citizens. A language is comprised of native speakers. This contains countless stereotypes, meaningless clichés, sunken cultural treasures, and memory stands in the way of all of this.

Let's try to interpret, for example, our sacred national hymn by Ferenc Kölcsey, during whose grotesque music we all stand quietly at attention, or the sacred national «Oration» by Mihály Vörösmárty, during whose falsely performed accompanying music we also automatically stand at attention. Let's try to interpret these marvellous works of poetry from the standpoint of the 21st century within the borders of the European Union. I'm sure there's no need to mention that the conditions which inspired these poems and their contexts have long been forgotten. I don't intend to bore anyone with the details of how these poems came to be. Let us look instead at what they can tell us today in 2007. Do they tell us how they change into «jack in the boxes» a few times every year?

Is it still true that «The fates may bring thee bane or bliss — Here thou must live and die!» even though members of certain social classes can study and work abroad without difficulty? And was it true when hundreds of thousands left the country in the fall and winter of 1956? And in the decade prior to the First World War, when thousands were immigrating to the United States, was it true then? (And by the way, who exactly is the «Hungarian» who is called upon to show his unwavering loyalty, the call to arms which Petőfi followed into battle several years later? And to whom does it *not* apply? Just thinking about it is distressing. It's much more comforting to enjoy Vörösmárty's appeal for its rhyme than to read it as the Holy Hungarian Scriptures.)

Today, in 2007, how am I supposed to interpret the part about our sins incurring God's wrath? Does it mean he punished us with the Trianon Treaty and German and Soviet occupation because of «our» Mongolian invasion and Turkish yoke? Doesn't this ultimately lead to the concept of collective responsibility? Isn't it going too far to make society as a whole — which, of course, we consider the «people» — responsible for the decisions and actions of the political elite? And in the spirit of this collective responsibility, can the «people» have truly repented for the past and future, for all time?

How can we expect to find an effective collective memory in Hungary that can make us aware of our common past and make our present life worth living when historical research and political language (with its constant references to history) have nothing in common?

How can we soberly and objectively think about single major events in Hungarian history when these have cult status? How can we examine the tragic collision of the concept of national independence and that of civic development during the past two hundred years, when, like Pavlov's dogs, we become aggressively nationalistic the moment we

hear the word «national», and less than civil at hearing the word «civic», which we immediately equate with a certain political party?<sup>2</sup>

Collective forgetting is progressing at a surprisingly rapid rate. Not only have «we» — the members of a non-existent community — forgotten the events of 1956 (they were successfully suppressed during Kádár's consolidation and slipped into oblivion unnoticed), but «we Hungarians» can't even remember the decline of Kádárism, the shallow dictatorship. Which is truly amazing since we were apparently alive at the time and hopefully are not yet suffering from senility or Alzheimer's. Of course, in private, I can remember. I can remember what is good for me. As a writer, I can even say I awaken a collective memory, from which I draw my ideas. But this, of course, is only literary fiction, and when combined with an arbitrary narrative structure, it becomes postmodern rootlessness.

But beyond this, my hands are tied — I run into invisible but still very solid walls of forgetfulness. If I tell a fellow citizen that people are constantly working hard to re-examine our most recent history and then cite a series of articles on the issue which appeared in Newspaper X and Magazine Y, you can be sure that my compatriot will give me a hard, cutting stare and say, «So, you read Newspaper X and Magazine Y, do you?» At which point, he will turn his back on me and spit in contempt.

This is how you have to imagine the act of forgetting today in Hungary. In my mind, if I could rise above the landscape where I and «we» are busy leading our lives, if I could gaze over the wide current of time, then I'd have to change the first sentence of this article to read «It's good to lose ourselves in forgetting». Of course, I am referring more to the object than to the act.

But for the time being, I stand by my title.

László Márton, born in Budapest in 1959, studied Hungarian Studies, German Studies and Sociology. Márton published his first book of short stories in 1983. Between 1983 and 1990 he worked as an editor at Helikon Publishing in Budapest, after which time he became a freelance writer and translator. He has translated a number of important German literary works into Hungarian (e.g., by Novalis, Kleist and Goethe). His awards include a DAAD scholarship in Berlin 1998/99 and the Belles Lettres Prize in 2001. The short story «In the Austrian Orient» was recently published in German by Edition Thanhäuser in 2005. László Márton currently resides in Budapest.

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to «the penny has dropped», meaning that someone has finally realized the situation they are in.



# RESIDE IN DESIRE

Earlier this year the writer Judith Kuckart travelled to Pécs, a city in Hungary that will share the title of «European Capital of Culture» with Essen and the Ruhr region in 2010. The Federal Cultural Foundation is contributing to Germany's «Capital of Culture» events with a major project focussing on cultural education. As we reported in the last issue, the project *An Instrument for Every Child* will provide over 200,000 primary school children the opportunity to learn an instrument during their school day from teachers from local music schools. We were interested in hearing what Judith Kuckart experienced during her reading tour through Hungary, where she visited a number of primary schools. A very personal German-Hungarian cultural encounter as we see from her letters to her friend.

BY  
JUDITH  
KUCKART

**M**y friend M. H. visited Pécs for the first time in her life last summer, and this is what she said when she returned to Berlin: Pécs is a city where you can sit under fig trees, stroll across St. István Square on warm evenings wearing light summer dresses, and where you're not surprised to find late Roman artefacts in underground car parks or when digging in your backyard. I'd love to stay in Pécs and open up a cinema. It's much prettier than Budapest, not so pretentious, so artificial, so lifeless and stiff. Go there! Hungary's first public library is located in Pécs. This is how it happened. A year later I went there because of the books.

Pécs, Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Dear Mrs. H.,

I came here from Budapest in January wearing a red ski jacket. A little before ten in the morning, I took the express train from the furthest platform at the Keleti/East Train Station. The train took us to Sarajevo, it had curtains in the windows, was overheated, and the morning was as grey and unfriendly as a caretaker. There were long, flat stretches where my grandmother would have yelled «Pusztá Pusztá» and thought about the spicy salad she ate during her childhood. Finally, after about two hours, the first hills crept into view. Southwest Hungary where Swabians, Croats, Serbs and Hungarians all live together and drink that world-famous wine that grows on their southern slopes. But who knows anything about how they live together in harmony? After three hours, we're there. Even at the Pécs train station, all the ticket windows are fitted with ornate curtains that are closed tight like locks. A young man wearing a thick shawl and with a photographer in tow walks over to me. The camera flashes before I can even say a word. Welcome, the young man says, and I forget the photographer — at least for a while.

We have a full schedule today. First we drive to the Ghandi High School — a boarding school for Roma children. It's in a very bad part of town, the young man tells me while he's driving. He loosens his shawl and says, this quarter used to be a mining settlement. Meszes, he says. Excuse me, I ask. It's called Meszes, he repeats. Some people never go there, and there are some who won't go when it gets dark, he explains, but Pécs has had to deal with worse things than Meszes. From the outside, it looks very peaceful, says the young man with the shawl and points at a drab, nondescript row of two-storey buildings lining the street of Meszes, but like I said, when it gets dark... OK, Meszes, I say and immediately forget the name. This Hungarian language just doesn't want to stay in my head. Hungary only works for me through remembering, not through memory.

When we arrive at the Roma school, we're greeted by a large, pale-faced woman who speaks English. She is the widow of the former director of the Ghandi High School, who was tragically killed in a car accident at the age of 42. Hearing how people talk about him, it seems that he was the school. He was Roma, his wife is Hungarian, they have four sons who attend the German school. We are greeted by two former students who now work here as German teachers. German is the primary foreign language taught at the Ghandi High School. The first teacher, József (Joka) Orsós, is a big man and has a wide forehead, and the second, Lakatos Csaba, is shorter than most of the students who walk past us in the corridor. The third German teacher is Attila, a Hungarian. He has blue eyes. The only person visibly excited by our visit is an energetic older lady with thick, coarse red hair named Karin, who, guessing from her last name, must have married a Hungarian. She tells me she's the grandmother here and that she's 120 years old. No one disagrees. Including myself, because I get the feeling nobody has ever disagreed with her. Even the young man with the shawl is quiet and opens a bottle of mineral water.

What is that, I ask, when we enter the school library which is apparently no hallowed hall, just a library slash lounge slash computer room. I point to a ladder that leads to a hole in the ceiling in the middle of the room.

The graduating class is studying for their final exams in the attic — that's their retreat, Grandmother Karin explains.

Near the ladder that leads to the «retreat», I notice a bookcase of Roma literature. The Roma have two languages — an older and a more recent language. Lovari and Baesch. All Roma children are required to learn the older language. We don't have any real novels written in Lovari, says the short teacher Csaba, but we have fairy tales. He tenderly lifts a blue-coloured book from the shelf and reads several lines aloud.

That sounds like, like... I struggle to put my finger on it. He smiles. And the dialects, he says, depend on the occupation. The fishermen speak the fish dialect, the tent builders speak tent, horse dealers speak horse. And now let's take a tour of the school, shall we, he says in his «teacher» voice.

Theatre auditorium/black, workshop/bright with swivel lathes from Denmark, art room with wall murals, cluttered storeroom that smells like incense and oil paints. Someone gives me a beautiful high-rimmed bowl that the kids made. At the bottom of the bowl is a slip of paper with the word *Geschenk* meaning «present» written on it.

I soon learn that the boys are not allowed to enter the girl's wing because their underwear might be lying around. The students like sitting on the floor, they're used to it. That's what they do at home. You'll find a bed, television, stereo in their rooms, but seldom a chair or table. The things that I don't notice, they tell me during the tour — for instance, that Roma women die early. Many children grow up without mothers. The cause of death is frequently lung and heart problems, while men suffer from back problems because of the hard manual labour they do in the woods without machines. In one of the classes, there are twelve children without mothers, one good-looking boy with golden trainers is an orphan, a girl wearing a hair band, sitting next to him where she's studying German for her final exam, recently discovered that she had two other siblings somewhere else. And the girl with the long, long hair leaning over the dictionary is an emotional wreck, Grandmother Karin says. She witnessed how her father stabbed her mother to death six months ago. Oh, I say. The camera flashes. The kids like to dance a lot and make music, the grandmother says. Oh, I say. The photographer takes a picture of the grandmother which is fine with me. Oh death, the grandmother sighs, and I can see she truly loves these precocious, dark-skinned, affection-hungry children who seem to reside in a state of desire that we are not familiar with.

In the afternoon, we head to the Lenau Haus. There are three nice people working in the office and there's a room under the roof where I can stay the night. On the way to my room, I see hundreds of dolls dressed in traditional costumes, all silent and arms outstretched as if they had a vision for us having passed them. Most of the fabric is dyed in midnight blue. The Germans originally introduced this particular shade of blue to the Hungarians, who have continued to dye their curtains, blankets and perhaps even their sheets in midnight blue ever since. I'd like to tell my daughter about these, about the dolls, I say, do you have a phone I can use? The friendly man from the office explains that there used to be a telephone on the first floor between door 3 and door 4, but it's not there anymore. After his long explanation, I can clearly see it in my mind as if it were still there. Back in my room under the roof, I change into a skirt and then we go to my reading at the Komitatsbibliothek, which is one of the reasons I came here — to help bring people and books together. On our way to the library, we pass the cathedral that looks almost like the one in Speyer. That's where Bishop Meier, a Hungarian-German, lives, says the young man. The Bishop recently turned down a parents' petition to build a new gym at the Catholic high school. Catholics don't need sports! But I need a pair of earplugs for the night, I say. We go to a pharmacy where seven very sluggish, white-clad ladies work and where I wait for a quarter hour to get my earplugs. We almost don't make it to my reading on time, the photographer tags along and takes pictures of us being late.

My reading is at the Gyöző-Czorba Komitatsbibliothek. The director is a very interesting woman who clearly has a sense of snow, at least that's the impression I get from looking at her face. We sit down on a pompous sofa suite with Biedermeier upholstery in her office, which is as formal as the e-mails she wrote me in German when she invited me to Pécs to read at her library. Now that she sees me in person, she thinks I'm pretty, she says in Hungarian. The photographer obviously hadn't noticed this before and reaches for his camera.

The audience is large and quite young. Luckily, the pretty, blonde Judith from Weimar reads the Hungarian translation of a short story by me, Judith from Zurich, in such a way that I understand everything though I don't speak a word of Hungarian. She's very stylish, wears brown fishnet stockings, has a long neck and attractive décolleté that seems to glow when she reads. The young man with the shawl acts as the moderator, which he does very well, and this time he takes off the shawl in the overheated room and stands in front of a massive wall of books, between potted plants and furniture I recognize from the place that used to be called the GDR. At one point, my gaze wanders to a book with Marlon Brando on the cover. Apparently a biography in Hungarian. What are you doing here, I happily and absent-mindedly think to myself, while an intelligent, young woman from the University of Pécs, Department of German Literature, asks me about moments of directness and indirectness in my text. I give her the same smile I gave Brando, because I can't think of anything intelligent to say. An older gentleman helps me out by saying that the German word for «poet» in Hungarian is translated as «one who broods». There, I say, that's the difference between Hungarians and Germans. In Hungary, writing is more about brooding — in the sense of hatching and providing warmth? He nods. That's right, he says. And after the reading, sitting together at a small table, nipping the wine the library director passes me, still with that sense of snow in her face, he asks me whether I'd be willing to look in on his pretty daughter when I get back to Berlin. She's all alone there and wants to be an actress. As my friend Márta Nagy from Budapest once told me, Hungarian parents take care of their children until the day they die.

That evening we decide to go to Café Dante near the palace where Bishop Meier, who has something against sports, lives near the catacombs. Do you remember, dear Mrs. H? Bishop Meier from Fünfkirchen, I mean? Café Dante is a very impressive place that reminds me of those old train station departure lounges. Which remind me of the French word for departure lounge — *salle des pas perdus* — hall of lost steps. The young man with the shawl has a ton of information about the city, he tells me about the Church of St. Augustine with windows from a previous mosque, about the Pécs National Theatre in the Elephant House, which we haven't seen yet, about the Bóbita Puppet Theatre and the Croatian Theatre, which we also haven't seen yet, and he tells me about the early Christian cemetery that is listed as a World Cultural Heritage site, and which we definitely have to go see. He's not drinking alcohol, and I realize I'll never remember all of this. Before I start getting frustrated with myself, I think of Uwe Johnson who once said that information is the enemy of memory.

Truly yours,

JK

Pécs, Thursday, January 18, 2007

Dear Mrs. H.,

Attila, the German teacher with the blue eyes from the Gandhi High School, wasn't quite gung-ho when we asked him early this morning in the Abitur class whether it'd be possible to hold a theatre workshop in German. He doesn't think such a project would work. Would we get a day off from school? the boy in the golden trainers asks. Will there be dancing? the girl next to him asks and stretches out her legs. I think they're worried that what I have in mind has something to do with those heavy German dictionaries on the desks in front of them, which they're just learning to use. In the beginning, Grandmother Karin tells me, they started at the first page when they were looking for a word like «Zänge» or «Zorn».

My first visit to the Valerie Koch High School, the German school, is easier. This is where we plan to organize a writing workshop during my next visit in April. The director meets us at the door, and from the honour it seems to give him, I get the feeling that my reputation «exceeds» me. There are 120 students sitting in the auditorium which can be partitioned from the corridor with a pink curtain. No reading, I

think to myself, please don't let me do a reading here, and while I'm thinking this, I hear myself ask the students if they'd like to leave Pécs someday. Yes, some of them nod. Why? Why stay? A boy replies.

I want to stay here, says a chubby girl who has her hand on the thigh of the boy sitting next to her, I want to stay here, I was born here, I belong here. And if you could travel anywhere you wanted, where would you go? I ask and hear New York, Japan, Stuttgart and Mallorca. And Berlin, says a boy with a cowlick, because of the culture. What culture? I ask. You know, the Wall, he says. But you weren't even born yet when the Wall came down, I reply. Yeah, he says, but still.

An hour later. A lady, who looks like a smartly-dressed Soviet, sits across from me, doesn't touch the piece of cake on her plate, and nods at the suggestions I make about what I could do during my next visit at the University's German Lit department. The senior chair is the one who makes the final decision on the matter, a somewhat scatter-brained man with a loud laugh who eventually finishes the Soviet lady's cake. Writing workshop? I ask. Or an analysis of one of my stories in class led by that young female professor who made such a good impression at my reading yesterday at the Komitatsbibliothek? Or a lecture on Thomas Mann?

Dear Mrs. H., guess what they chose. Right. Thomas Mann. The senior chair, as impenetrable as Napoleon, made a bow and said: Thomas Mann, but only on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

We hurry on our way, the young man and I, to the Youth Centre where the dance and music groups of all the schools in Pécs perform — including the Ghandi High School. We're late, they're already dancing when we arrive. The girls, wearing high heels and long skirts, dance with quick, short steps, and their arms, gently swaying at their elbows, stretch high to the red spotlights. Grace, dear Mrs. H., even Kleist couldn't have said it better. Their feet determine the dance, their torsos and limbs simply follow. It reminds me of what Grandmother Karin told me yesterday — the girls become sexually mature at a young age, they get pregnant, sometimes they have an abortion in secret, which only their mothers know about, not their fathers. That's why they set up a correspondence school which allows girls to take their exams at home while taking care of their babies.

Then it's time for the guitar group from the Ghandi High School to come on stage, but five of the six members are absent and so they can't perform, the girl on stage explains, tugging at her tiger-striped dress reproachfully. But then another boy joins her and they end up performing, playing for one of the fat mothers wearing a headscarf, sitting in front of us. She takes up two seats, one for her and one for the father who's not there.

An hour later, we jump back into the car and drive to Skekszárd. On our way, the young man and I listen to gypsy music on the radio and talk about Hungarian culture. On our way back, we listen to Velvet Underground and talk about Berlin, the Volksbühne and the famous Jürgen Kuttner. So I guess we talked about — our homeland? Around 10 pm, I'm back in Pécs, back in Café Dante, drinking a small glass of beer alone during a thunderstorm. At 10:25 pm, the wind settles and on the Main Square near the city hall, near the extendable bell tower of the basilica, McDonald's closes for the night. Will this all change when Pécs becomes a capital of culture in three years? What did the young man say this afternoon while we sipped our coffees, exhausted, killing time until our next appointment, surrounded by German medical students who are finishing their studies in Pécs financed by their parents? Where are all the hotels we need for 2010 supposed to come from, and where are they all going to go when the year's over? he says and nervously pulls his shawl tighter around his neck. I'm sleeping at the Lenau House among the evil dolls.

Good night,

JK

The writer and director Judith Kuckart was born in the Ruhr region in 1959 and now lives and works in Zurich and Berlin. Her most recent novel *Kaiserstraße* (Kaiser Street) was published by DuMont in spring 2006. Her next book, a crime thriller, will also be released by DuMont in autumn 2008.

# KAFKA IN FRANKENSTEIN

Franz Kafka has come to symbolize the eventful history of German-Czech cultural relations. For those who think there's nothing new for researchers to discover about Kafka, or who claim the writer is only of interest to philologists, Ekkehard W. Haring's article offers intriguing insights into the most recent research on Kafka. The Frankenstein sanatorium on the German-Czech border has not only been influenced by Kafka, but the imprint of Frankenstein can also be found in Kafka's works. The 125th anniversary of Franz Kafka's birth will take place in 2008, and despite the often controversial cultural relations between Germany and the Czech Republic, he remains uncontested as one of the greatest European writers of modern times. Following cooperative cultural programmes with Poland (*Büro Kopernikus*) and Hungary (*Bipolar*), the Federal Cultural Foundation will establish a three-year *German-Czech Cultural Encounters* programme (2008–2011) comprised of a series of bilateral cultural projects.

BY  
EKKEHARD W.  
HARING

**M**ore than a century old, the Frankenstein sanatorium (Podháji) near Rumburg has long played a role in the local and regional history of northern Bohemia. However, the sanatorium is also the setting of significant historic developments of the 20th century that have shaped medicine, politics, literature and the turbulent relationship between Czechs and Germans.

Owned by the industrial tycoon Carl Dittrich, who lived in the neighbouring town of Schönlinde (Kránsná Lipa), the sanatorium had already become internationally renowned as a physical-dietetic clinic even before World War I. The spectrum of «curative methods» ranged from traditional medicine to the most modern and promising procedures of the times, such as electrotherapy. These new procedures, along with Dittrich's financial support, may have been key factors that helped transform this private clinic into a state institution with a «national mission» by war's end. The authorities at the Kingdom of Bohemia's *State Centre for the Care of Homecoming Soldiers* in Prague were feverishly trying to find a suitable treatment centre for the increasing number of «war neurotics» coming home from the front, and, in 1915, after careful consideration, chose the Frankenstein sanatorium. By the time it was converted into a public psychiatric hospital in the spring of 1917, it was clear that such a hospital could not merely be a state-run institution. It was established as a national sanatorium — the *German Public Psychiatric Hospital for the Kingdom of Bohemia*. The establishment of the hospital and its new board of trustees is due in large part to a famous writer — one whose works, much like nerves, can be nationally identified with a certain amount of political effort. Franz Kafka and his superior Eugen Pfohl were in charge of the project «Public Psychiatric Hospital» at the Worker Accident Insurance Company (AUVA), which oversaw the operations at the State Centre for the Care of Homecoming Soldiers. Evidence shows that Kafka, who had spent time in Frankenstein, perhaps even as a «test patient» in summer 1915, was present at all the committee meetings that evaluated potential sanatoriums. In addition to writing the inaugural announcement for the board of trustees, Kafka also penned a series of newspaper articles and announcements in which he drummed up political and financial support for the project. These texts and his literary works reveal a number of interesting correlations.

## The sanatorium — a literary setting

Recalling the sanatoriums in works by Thomas Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke, Hermann Hesse, Robert Musil and Arthur Schnitzler, it seems that classical modern German-language writers had an affinity to literary depictions of hospitals. Writers of the early 20th century regarded these settings as topoi of crisis which could best reflect their own destabilizing life experiences. This is hardly surprising if we view the sanatorium from the perspective of society around 1900. It was a place situated in the grey zone between genius and insanity, recognition and loss of self, socialization and isolation, normality and exception, in short — between recovery and doom. The persistent interest in nervous conditions, also the comfortable shift of everyday life into the closed society of high-altitude sanatoriums was not always free of artificial calculation. If there truly was a veritable mental sickness of that age, as Nietzsche claimed, then the sanatorium was not only its primary setting, but also its most important stage. We shouldn't overlook the fact, however, that not only the literary characters, but often the writers themselves required treatment at sanatoriums.

In 1903 Franz Kafka began seeking out health resorts and treatment centres in hopes of regenerating his physical and emotional stability. Here Kafka could find — if only temporarily — an alternative lifestyle which he and many of his contemporaries regarded as highly promising and emotionally stabilizing. He visited sanatoriums almost every year to get away from the nerve-wracking urban life of Prague, and more importantly, to receive treatment for his nervous condition, neurasthenia. By the time he fell sick with pulmonary tuberculosis in 1917, he had visited an impressive number of resorts and sanatoriums. If we examine his biography more closely, however, we find that Kafka was not only a patient during these stays. The sanatoriums provided favourable conditions for writing. Especially his earlier visits to sanatoriums resulted in activities and impulses that influenced his life and writing for years to come. For example, Kafka had his first inten-

sive relationship with an older woman at the well-known *Hydrotherapeutic Sanatorium Zuckmantel* (Silesia), which he visited twice (1905 and 1906). He used the impressions he gained from this relationship in his short story *Preparations for a Country Wedding*. Kafka experienced another dramatic occurrence at the *Water Health Resort* in Riva in 1913 where he witnessed the suicide of one of his co-patients — an episode he used in his story fragment *The Hunter Gracchus*. In 1912 Kafka visited Adolf Just's *Model Sanatorium for Pure Natural Life Jungborn* (Harz) — a small community far from the city and metropolitan life. Here, the patients were exposed to the curative powers of nature — air huts, nude culture, clay wraps, sunbathing, vegetarian food, choral singing and walks in the moonlight — all of which reaffirmed their naked, earth-bound existence and allowed them to experience the utopia of an archaic society. Kafka, who was in the middle of a new version of *Amerika* at the time, was clearly inspired by these new impressions, which he integrated in the chapter fragment *Naturtheater von Oklahoma*.

As in Jungborn, Riva and Zuckmantel, Kafka also gained a wealth of impressions during his stays at *Lahmanni's Naturopathic Sanatorium Dresden White Deer* (1903) and the *Naturopathic Sanatorium Fellenberg* near Zürich (1911). Judging by his reports and notes concerning his experiences at these sanatoriums, it is astounding that his usual objective narrative voice gave way to a more personal and subjective perspective due to his active participation. Kafka was by no means sceptical of sanatorium life. He clearly believed in the naturopathic methods as were practiced at the sanatoriums mentioned above.

## Naturopathic treatment

Naturopathic life concepts were developed and implemented at all of these sanatoriums. For those who were interested in finding the ideal hospital for their needs, *sanatorium catalogues* were published every year, containing information and descriptions of the sanatoriums — some of which were remarkably embellished. Depending on their financial means, visitors could choose from a more or less wide spectrum of therapeutic treatments — light therapy, water cures, faradisation, hydro-electric baths, vegetarian dining, remedial gymnastics, and often hypnosis and psychotherapy, as well. Kafka was one of many who followed a programme that involved relentless self-discipline that could be supplemented by individual exercises — in this case, «fletcherizing» (chewing food very thoroughly to improve one's digestion, based on teachings by the American health guru Horace Fletcher), «mulling» (special gymnastic exercises developed by the Danish doctor Jens Peder Müller), rowing, swimming, horse riding, hiking and wearing light, well-ventilated clothing.

Kafka became interested in alternative ways of living at an early age, encouraged by his uncle, the country doctor Siegfried Löwy from Triesch who was an outdoor fanatic. He gained most of his experience in this area during his successive stays at sanatoriums. He was also influenced by lectures, talks and personal encounters. While on a business trip to Warnsdorf in 1911, Kafka happened to meet the industrialist and naturopathic expert Moriz Schnitzer, whom he admired as an authority of the Lebensreform movement and vegetarianism and as an outspoken opponent of medication and vaccination. Kafka enthusiastically described his meeting with Schnitzer to his friend Max Brod, who apparently didn't share his enthusiasm as Brod's diary entry from 4–5 May 1911 indicates: «... Kafka told me the most wonderful things about the garden city of Warnsdorf, about a «magician», a naturopath, rich manufacturer who examined him, just looking at his neck from the side and from the front, then told him about the poisons in his spinal cord that were about to reach his brain, all caused by living the wrong way. The treatment he recommended — sleeping with the windows open, sunbathing, garden work, getting involved in a naturopathic club, and a club magazine subscription, published by the manufacturer himself. He's against doctors, medications, vaccinations. His vegetarian interpretation of the bible — Moses led the Jews through the desert so that they could become vegetarians in forty years.» (Max Brod: *Über Kafka*. Frankfurt a. M., 1991 edition, 97f.) Despite his unusual recommendations and explanations, Kafka continued to deeply admire the «magician» of Warnsdorf for many years. On 5 March, 1912, he wrote in his diary, «If I only had the energy to found a naturo-

As a special project in the *German-Czech Cultural Encounters* programme, the Federal Cultural Foundation is funding a book titled *Historic-Critical Edition of Franz Kafka's Complete Writings, Prints and Typescripts* (edited by Dr. Roland Reuß and Dr. Peter Staengle) in cooperation with the Stroemfeld Verlag.

pathic association». And in 1917 when his sister Ottla was looking for an apprenticeship in agriculture, Kafka wrote to Schnitzer for advice (but unfortunately received no answer).

## The Frankenstein sanatorium

Moriz Schnitzer, the charismatic founder of the *Association of Naturopathy* and publisher of the *Reform Paper for Health Care*, proposed founding a naturopathic sanatorium in northern Bohemia in 1896. Its realization turned out to be problematic as the established school of medicine hedged a deep resentment toward the concept, and in some cases, reacted with massive resistance. They were worried, and with good reason, that such sanatoriums would draw a significant contingent of patients away from the doctor's practices. Sanatoriums began shooting up like mushrooms around the country, and they were extremely popular. In the spirit of public education, the Bohemian medical profession published its own anti-Reform magazine, titled *The Health Teacher*.

Schnitzer took steps to realize his concept of a hospital based on the «newest curative methods» by establishing a *Consortium to Build the Frankenstein Sanatorium* in the neighbouring town of Rumburg. When it finally opened in 1901, the sanatorium boasted an impressive range of services and facilities, such as bathing and clay packing rooms, inhalatorium, «Zander Hall» with therapeutic gymnastic equipment, electric light baths, and sunlight and carbonated water baths. The hospital catered from the outset to patients with nervous conditions. The number of incoming patients continued to increase with the addition of specialized treatment and improvements to the facilities, as a pleasant atmosphere was just as important to the sanatorium as the therapeutic methods it offered. Like many hospitals of that time, the Frankenstein sanatorium offered an all-round programme. Not only was the sanatorium a place of alternative therapeutic practice, but also a focal point of social life. The social, political, aesthetic and cultural demands of its paying customers required the sanatorium to offer much more than the Spartan functionality of a sick ward. In addition to the new treatment rooms fitted with the most modern light-therapy equipment, patients at the sanatorium could also enjoy the spacious park grounds, a garden villa, dining veranda, library and arcade. In 1905 the Frankenstein sanatorium received a royal state prize as the «best equipped hospital in Bohemia» and in 1906, was awarded the Golden Exhibition Prize «for the introduction of new treatment methods». Within a few years the sanatorium had become a model treatment centre. The hospital soon prided itself on being a «first-rate physical-dietetic health resort» which offered services at a relatively «moderate price».

As the competition between the sanatoriums increased, however, Frankenstein had to distance itself from its original credo of offering purely natural methods and treatment. Among the many diverse sanatoriums in the country, its distinctive naturopathic image became blurred by a wide variety of technical apparatus and the newest therapeutic forms. In order to run a profitable business, it was necessary to consider economic aspects, such as all-year or seasonal (summer) operation, low-cost broad-spectrum therapy or expensive specialized treatments, personnel issues, patient profiles, services, etc.

World War I and the drastic changes it caused also forced the hospitals to adjust the focus of their treatment. In wartime, the civilian demand for nature-oriented neurasthenic treatment had to make room for other politically motivated treatment of nervous illnesses. Sanatoriums were hard hit by a lack of trained personnel, diminished affluence of their patients and food shortages. Soon hospitals everywhere were being sold for a penny or closed down, as most people realized the general state of emergency would not be ending anytime soon. Frankenstein would have surely suffered the same fate if it were not for the Prague-based AUVA, which chose the sanatorium to receive hundreds of mentally unstable soldiers returning from the front.

When Kafka visited Frankenstein in 1915, he found it well-equipped, but judging from its outward appearance, his general impression of the sanatorium was rather sobering. In a letter to his ex-fiancée Felice Bauer, Kafka wrote «There are no good sanatoriums in Bohemia, the best one in Rumburg is bad enough.» (31 May, 1916). According to the evaluation by the *State Centre for the Care of Homecoming Soldiers*,

the sanatorium fulfilled all the requirements in terms of patient capacity and, above all, good technical facilities. In May 1917, the first 80 neuropathic soldier patients were admitted to the former sanatorium. The hospital was allowed to administer its notorious, but highly-praised electric shock therapy for treating war neuroses — until the practice was deemed inhumane and banned at the end of the war. The former dietetic health resort had become a «testing laboratory at the end of the world», no longer suited to hunger artists and nature worshippers.

The episode «Kafka in Frankenstein» provides a remarkable view of the multi-faceted history of German-Bohemian sanatoriums. At the end of his journey through Europe seeking places of healing for both personal and professional reasons, the experienced patient Franz Kafka stated: «As far as I'm concerned, I closed the chapter of sanatoriums last year, the sick [...] are better advised to stay away from sanatoriums» — «I don't want to be massaged, wrapped, electrified, bathed, examined, or become well-informed about my psychoses on the basis of well-informed diagnoses.» (to Felice Bauer, 31 May, 1916). Little did he know that he was about to venture on a truly arduous journey through the sick wards of the world. In 1917 he came down with pulmonary tuberculosis. In 1918 he fell sick with the Spanish flu. By the time he died in 1924, Kafka had spent a good portion of his remaining years at lung sanatoriums.

Since the fall of the Hapsburg Empire and the founding of the Czech nation, the physical-dietetic Frankenstein sanatorium has witnessed an eventful history, which still remains to be fully reconstructed. After 1918, the hospital's new administrative board was able to get the sanatorium back to full operation with a wide variety of therapeutic methods. However, it was never able to regain its pre-war success and reputation. Frankenstein continued its operations under the name of the German Public Psychiatric Hospital during the 1920s. The German occupiers used the clinic as a military hospital during World War II. When the country was reformed as Czechoslovakia, the hospital continued operating as a psychiatric clinic until the 1960s. Since then the facilities in Frankenstein have been used by the Rumburg Municipal Clinic, which includes a rehabilitation ward.

Once a model sanatorium on the border of nations and discourses, Frankenstein is now a place of forgotten history — a place where time seems to have stood still. There is no plaque, no sign of the neurotic patient Franz Kafka and his involvement in Bohemian psychiatric politics. Frankenstein/Rumburg has preserved the memory for its rare visitors in a different, very authentic way.

Ekkehard W. Haring, born in 1966, studied German Studies and Comparative Literature at the Universities of Leipzig and Athens, and received doctoral degrees from the University of Leipzig and Paris VIII. He is currently working as an instructor for DAAD in the Czech Republic. His numerous publications include articles on Prague literature, German-Jewish culture and medical history. Together with co-director Benno Wagner, Haring is working with a group of German-Czech historians, literary scholars, medical historians and regional studies scholars to document the practically forgotten history of this unique model sanatorium in the heart of Europe.

# AT HOME WITH GOETHE

The Federal Cultural Foundation's *Home Game* fund supports theatre projects that create new points of interaction between cities and their residents. The Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar (DNT) posed the question «Theatre — but for whom?» and allowed the skateboarders on the Theaterplatz to perform on its main stage. *My God Rides a Skateboard*, a project featuring 17 amateur and two professional actors, initiated a discussion about the lack of space for subculture in the classical city of Weimar.

BY  
IRENE  
GRÜTER

The tables in front of the ice-cream parlour are covered with morning dew, a cat scampers behind «City Kebab» and two ladies carrying handbags head to the department store across the way. The world is slowly waking up on this quiet morning on the Theaterplatz in Weimar. A pan flute player spreads out his blanket, three bearded guys with beer bottles rise with the first rays of sun, and music students burdened with bulky instrument cases hastily cross the square without even glancing at the famous statue in front of the city theatre. Goethe patronizingly lays his hand on Schiller's shoulder, both of them gaze into the distance with indifference, as if everything that came after them was only an extremely long epilogue of masterpieces of German classicism. Directly behind them, the temple-like, pillared facade of the Deutsches Nationaltheater strives to reach greater heights — an ideal backdrop for countless photos of tourists who have posed in front of the statue. By noontime the square is busy, kids swerve over the smooth flagstones on their skateboards, sailing over the wilted floral wreath someone has laid at Goethe's feet.

Life here is not always as peaceful as it is today. The BMX bikers and skateboarders are not generally welcome because they clash with the classical image of the city. They disturb the theatregoers and damage the sandstone steps, the dramaturge Lutz Kessler explains. Since he began at the theatre two years ago, he has become fascinated by the mini theatre right outside on the square. And yet it's puzzling that so many performers who use the venue as their own personal stage have no contact with the theatre whatsoever. A centrally located city theatre that doesn't have anything to do with the majority of the local inhabitants? «Theatre, but for whom?» was the underlying question for a project that asked the people on the Theaterplatz for their opinion of the theatre, and invited them to develop their own evening performance on the main stage.

The planning process quickly led the organizers away from the Theaterplatz, to the local clubs, to Weimar West and the graffiti scene. The original goal — to find participants from a wide range of age groups and social classes — turned out to be more difficult than expected. Many people were interested, but very few had enough time or discipline to rehearse on a regular basis for five weeks. It's also quite possible that the topic of the project — the conflict with the skateboarders — appealed more to young people than older citizens. Skateboarders and BMX bikers on the main stage of the Deutsches Nationaltheater? The theatre where masterpieces of German classicism were first performed, where Wagner and Liszt attended their own world premieres, where the Weimar Republic was founded? No small matter for a city that prides itself on being the stronghold of German high culture. «There are a lot of young people, and also artists, who complain that there's no place for subcultures in the cultural city of Weimar.» explains Jonathan Loosli who helped prepare the *Home Game* project. He has been a member of the DNT ensemble for two years, and though he loves his work, he, too, has sometimes felt dissatisfied with the hermetic tendency of municipal theatre. «There's an identity crisis, a blank space in this form of high culture,» he says. «Actually, it's absurd that a highly subsidized theatre has to receive extra funding so that it will have something to do with the city.»

To have something to do with the city. This goal seems rather modest compared to Schiller's hope that the stage would one day become the «fourth pillar of the state». The philosophers of German classicism envisioned the stage as the forum of civil public life — yet anyone who dares take them at their word faces a difficult challenge. The problem is that only a very small portion of the population attends theatre performances — the accusation of elitism always hangs heavy in the air. The challenge, therefore, is not enlightenment, but rather participation.

Taking a walk through the prim and proper idyll of the town's historic centre, it's obvious why subculture has trouble establishing itself here. Weimar is the Disneyland for cultural enthusiasts. Tourists can stay overnight in the Johann Sebastian Bach Room, take breakfast in front of Lotte's silhouette, promenade past Hitler's favourite hotel on a stroll through the green gardens along the Ilm. In front of Goethe's garden house, older gentlemen wearing college rucksacks recite verses of poetry. One would be hard put to find a place in Weimar where a ramp for skateboarders wouldn't clash with the city's image.

On a bus heading toward Buchenwald. The rehearsal rooms of the Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar are situated at the periphery of the city between barren fields and a new housing area. On a brown-coloured

building facade, written in large red letters is the quote, «Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out.» Václav Havel's words might have a less cynical touch if they weren't written on a homeless shelter. The rehearsal rooms are located across the street in a former military command centre. A larger-than-life panda bear peers out the window, there's also a wheelchair, skateboards and a bunch of colourful smocks lying around. The participants have collected several props from the storeroom, and now they sit in a sofa corner and discuss what they actually want to do in their theatre performance. The group is already on close terms, though they have only been rehearsing together for one week.

The 19-year-old Tom, one of the youngest members here, is currently training to be a salesman of sports articles. He is also one of the BMX bikers who practice their stunts on the Theaterplatz every day. He immediately wanted to perform on the main stage so he «could finally show people the kind of body control you need to do what we do». During the five-week rehearsal period, he and his colleagues build a ramp in the DNT studio which will later be set up on the main stage. Lucian, an expert in the graffiti scene, also wants to publicly demonstrate the kind of techniques one needs in order to excel at graffiti art. Mario, who is 34 and the oldest in the group, is involved in a number of projects as a social worker, but hasn't been able to find a full-time position and therefore has to live on welfare.

At first glance the seventeen participants look like happy boy scouts, but during the breaks you can often catch a snippet of conversation that reveals that some of them have a past more dented and bruised than you might imagine. While they're cooking water on two lukewarm hotplates, they talk about juvenile court, drug incidences, violence in relationships, encounters with right-wing extremists, teenage pregnancies. The water for the spaghetti starts to boil, Sven Miller looks into the room, it's already three o'clock. «We work wicked hard», Frizzi says with her bluest wink of the eye, and that's exactly how it should be, the director says. Later he claims that theatre is a way of life — in his opinion, working in a collective is the political dimension of art. Born in the Ruhrpottregion, the professional actor / director has lived in the United States for about twenty years and now teaches at the University in Bloomington. This isn't his first project with amateur actors — he's also worked with inmates in a New York prison, in psychiatric wards and schools.

His concept for the evening sounds a little vague at this point. The participants are supposed to decide what they'd like to show on stage. He tells them to write a short text that has something to do with their past. After dinner, the group throws some more ideas around. It's hard to imagine that in four weeks' time all these random ideas will congeal as a coherent theatre performance. Frizzi draws little hearts in her pink notebook, rocks back in her chair, and makes her «I'm thinking of something totally different» look. Steini taps the edge of the stage energetically, with two drumsticks in hand, he performs everything in reach. The group is still in the process of forming, there's very little dramaturgy to speak of. It's not all about the artistic result, Sven Miller explains. «The process is the important thing.»

Three older ladies from the homeless shelter show up a little later. They're interested in the project, but giggle self-consciously like little girls, sensing that they're too old for the group. One of them used to work as a cleaning woman at the DNT years ago. When was the last time she went to the theatre? «Oh man!» She giggles and makes a dismissive gesture. «That was back in the GDR times.» When they're asked if they want to participate, they mumble. «That's not so easy». They finally shuffle away. Although the group seems a little relieved, their wake has left an awkward feeling in the room.

The discussion continues but it takes on a touchy undertone. Frizzi describes how she envisions her performance. She wants to come on stage like a diva, lean languorously on a grand piano and sing. Then she wants to destroy this doll-like illusion somehow, «so that people can see how I really am». When Eve Kolb, an actress in the ensemble, asks her what she exactly has in mind, tears well up in Frizzi's eyes and she leaves the room. It wasn't long ago that she had tried out for «Deutschland sucht den Superstar»<sup>1</sup> and made it to the final rounds of the preliminary selection, and then was kicked out by Dieter Bohlen and kicked around by the popular press. The discussion screeches to a halt. How does one best deal with the needs of non-professional actors who are supposed to depict events of their lives on stage? Eventually Eve loses her temper. «What is this, a self-therapy group, or what?»

Self-therapy — both the director and dramaturge think the phrase is inappropriate — but the brief moment of agitation shows just how tricky it can be to work with amateurs. «You have to be really careful not to make fun of them,» Jonathan says. And Eve explains that she can't rid herself of her ambivalence toward such projects. «What is theatre trying to achieve by going to [Joe Blow] on the street? I don't know. If I seriously want to change something in these people's lives, then I have to ask myself why I'm not a social worker like Mario.»

Where does the impact of theatre end and the social work begin? This is not always clear when developing projects with amateurs — which also applies to their artistic merits. A municipal theatre would not be able to take on such a task without additional funding, says Stephan Märki, the general theatre director of the DNT. He describes the basic mission of theatre: «A city theatre only makes sense if it establishes a line of communication with the city.» This is no easy task, especially in Weimar. Of course, there is a strong citizen-interest group that vehemently supports the theatre — particularly when the state government brings up the issue of merging the DNT with the theatre in nearby Erfurt. But two-thirds of Weimar's theatregoers are tourists and they come to this temple of classicism with set expectations. *My God Rides a Skateboard*, however, caters more to the city's inhabitants. «In a small city like Weimar, this kind of project functions like a burning glass,» Märki says. «I hope that we can generate more tolerance of other ways of life. Both sides need this friction — the audience as much as the skateboarders.» And even the theatre itself, since many of the employees are not in favour of allowing the skateboarders to use the main stage of the Deutsches Nationaltheater.

Four weeks later. After a bumpy dress rehearsal on the main stage, the group celebrates quietly at the kebab stand. No one can imagine how it will feel to perform their personal stories in front of 600 people the next day. The Theaterplatz starts filling up about forty-five minutes before the premiere. Izak the rapper and Steini walk down the streets, beating a drum and summoning people to the theatre with a megaphone. The magnificent main entrance of the theatre remains locked — no velvet red lobby, no gold trim tonight. Instead, the performers lead the audience to the dingy rear entrance, through the canteen and a maze of corridors, past the prop tables and costume racks, and right onto the main stage. From there, the audience members take the steps down into the auditorium. The first invisible boundary has been breached, and now everyone has become an actor. While the audience members find their seats, some of the answers from the survey are played over the loudspeakers. A female voice says, «Subculture is when you think you can throw your trash wherever you want.» You can cut the tension in the room with a knife.

Martin, wearing a Goethe wig, makes large circles around the stage on his skateboard, jumps off, and faces the audience. The other actors come up to the ramp one by one and introduce themselves. «For me,» says Mario, «adrenalin is when I get mail from the employment office.» Izak replies, «For me, adrenalin is when I don't get mail from the employment office.» All of them have an enormous stage presence, and always season their performances with a touch of irony. As if they instinctively knew what Brecht meant by the alienation effect. When someone asks Martin what role he's playing, he says «I'm playing myself in the form of Goethe.»

With platinum blond hair, in high-heels and dressed in patent leather, Mario totters to the ramp as the Queen of the Night. He talks about his experience as a homosexual in Weimar and doesn't let the comments from the audience break his concentration. Suddenly when he takes off his wig to reveal his shiny bald head, the audience goes quiet. They listen intently as he talks about his life as a social worker in the suburbs. Frizzi dons a white, glittery dress, her locks of golden hair fall down over her shoulder. She stretches lazily across a piano like in a girl's dream, and sings for the camera which enlarges her performance onto a projection screen. Later she comes back dressed in street clothes. «I know I'm beautiful», she says, and when the audience laughs, she shoots back: «That's a fact.» Then she talks about the image she has of herself and rejects her function as a projection surface. The words «Graffiti, but for whom?» suddenly appear on the screen. Lucian asks the audience whether art is art only because it hangs in a museum. A video shows him spraying the pillars of the theatre's main entrance, protected by two partitions that are lowered together with his artwork from the cyclorama above. The theatre's exterior gradually forces its way onto the stage until the protected interior implodes.

The big moment has finally arrived for the BMXers. Their performance on their self-made ramp can match any acrobatic routine at a professional circus. The audience cringes at every jump and responds with overwhelming applause at the spectacle on stage. One of the bikers grabs the microphone, «Now we have a ramp, but no place to put it. Does anyone have a suggestion?» Some of the audience members are invited onto the stage. The street worker Kathrin Schuchardt, who has accompanied the project from the start, moderates a discussion about the problematic issue of skateboarders on the Theaterplatz. Two weeks later, the discussion is taken up again with the city's mayor.

Izak is the highlight of the evening. «Black or white / right or left I don't know / if my eyes don't deceive me / then gray is straight / tell me what makes you / my friend or my foe / now it's time you decide.» Rhythmic waves run through his body as he weaves his own words with lines from the prologue of Goethe's Faust. «Here I am human», he chants, and from the hallowed auditorium of the DNT, the audience chants back, «Here I can be.» After the performance, he stands at the balustrade of the balcony and raps to crowds on the Theaterplatz. In this moment, he resembles a triumphant warrior returning from victory. Goethe and Schiller stand sturdy-legged among the theatregoers and gaze into the dark night sky.

After watching the performance, an older theatre subscriber says he sees the skateboarders with different eyes now, though he felt the showy revue numbers didn't deal with the subject matter deeply enough. «I see it as a cry for attention, a protest event, and that's why we shouldn't judge the performance based on the criteria normally used in theatre culture. It's a challenge to take a stand.» If art is supposed to change one's perception of the world, then this project did so in a number of ways. The exchange worked — in the end, the wild, good-natured youth subjected the theatre to its own dialysis, as Eve states with grin. Many of the actors had never entered the theatre before, and now they're dying to work together on another performance. And even the ramp for the skateboarders has found a new home, at least for the time being. Following the second performance, the local manager of the Deutsche Bank spontaneously offered to help fund its cost of maintenance.

Two months later, Lutz Kessler is sad to see the project come to an end. «There were so many talented people in the group. It's really unfortunate because it's obvious many of them will be lost again.» After a pause, he adds, «Now we need to keep it going. The time they had together changed so much in their lives, but now we'd have to work on an ongoing basis in order to achieve real change.» This is where the theatre reaches its limits. No single project can achieve more than what was achieved here. However, in order to take advantage of the full potential that lies in the connection of social work and theatre, one would have to employ entirely different means. It is necessary to continue the discussion about what kind of long-term impact and socio-political goal municipal theatre should pursue in order to reach «theatre-remote» groups. The next morning, the Theaterplatz looks as pristine as ever. A pigeon sits on Schiller's head. The floral wreath at Goethe's feet is gone.

Irene Grüter, born in Zug (CH) in 1979, studied German Studies and History in Bern. She now lives in Berlin where she works as freelance journalist. Irene Grüter is one of the talented young female journalists who contributed to the Berlin Theatertreffen's 11-festivalzeitung in 2006.

<sup>1</sup> The German version of «Pop Idol».

# «NOW WHO ARE WE?»

Between 1805 and 1808 the Heidelberg romanticists Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim collected traditional German folksongs and published them under the name «Des Knaben Wunderhorn» (The Boy's Magic Horn). The Theatre and Philharmonic Orchestra of Heidelberg recently hosted a *Home Game* project titled *The New Magic Horn* which, following the example of the two romanticists, gathered modern-day texts and songs from the inhabitants of the city. Over 400 people participated in the four performances which took place at the end of the last and the beginning of this season. Heidelberg's residents danced, sang and performed throughout the entire theatre. In cooperation with the orchestra and opera chorus, the project presented the world premieres of 25 new pieces by young composers. The dramaturge Olaf A. Schmitt describes his impressions of the *Home Game* project in Heidelberg.

BY  
OLAF A.  
SCHMITT

**N**ine-year-old Joshua sits at the Steinway in the office of the General Music Director and struggles with the complicated rhythm of the newly composed work for a speaker and orchestra. The word sequence seems completely random and the rhythm doesn't make any sense to him: «You believe only you yourself Person One that you possess value.» The General Music Director Cornelius Meister, who rarely works with such young soloists in private rehearsals, finally records his voice on CD for him. I start to wonder whether it was a good idea to allow people from the city to perform contemporary compositions as soloists for the Philharmonic Orchestra, bringing individuals together with widely varying levels of experience from completely different walks of life.

A week later, the boy stands on the main stage at the State Theatre of Saarbrücken, dressed in a white outfit marked with words written by people from Heidelberg. He stands next to the conductor and delivers the same text, this time with greater self-confidence, but still holding the slip of paper in his hand. Many of my doubts are swept away at this workshop performance at the «Children to Olympus!» congress three weeks prior to the Heidelberg premiere. In Heidelberg, Joshua stands at the front of the stage and recites his text effortlessly as if the words were his own. He hears the orchestra on the stage behind him and then asks the audience with a clear gesture, «Now who are we? Person Four?»

The break-dancers garner the most applause during their performance. They move to the music though its language is completely foreign to them; it lacks the element that is so crucial for break dance — a continuous beat. At the auxiliary venue «zwinger 1» where inquisitive audiences are allowed to take a peek at our rehearsals once a month, four dancers try out various moves for a short orchestra piece in one of our *Wunderhorn Camps*. A few days earlier, the leader of the break-dance group attended an orchestra rehearsal for the first time in his life and chose the *Antonitische Grotteske* — a piece of music featuring a clarinet motif taken from Gustav Mahler's composition of a *Wunderhorn* song. I bring the original Mahler piece to the Camp event and explain to the dancers and audience how the new composition refers to the original. For the next twenty minutes, the performers experiment with standard break-dance routines, but nothing seems to work, not even the old tricks. The break dancers listen again, try something new, talk it over, curse and swear, then pull themselves together. «We said we'd do this piece, so let's get on with it», the 23-year-old André says, trying to motivate the others in the group. Although the rehearsal doesn't produce any real results in the end, the audience and all of us find the whole process exciting. During the next few days, the break dancers listen to the short recording over and over again and analyze its structure. They search for musical signifiers, a pizzicato or a repetition of a motif, they invent a little story about power and envy. The composer attends one of the rehearsals and talks to them about his work. He admits that he, like the break dancers, thought it was absurd to interpret his piece through break dance. But now he is surprised to discover new aspects of his music through their moves.

We didn't want to make it easy for ourselves with the *New Magic Horn*. We wanted to bring people to the theatre who would not normally come in contact with one another in daily life — small children, senior citizens, rappers and orchestra musicians, rock bands and brass bands. The theme of this cross-disciplinary project is actually homemade. About two hundred years ago, Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim collected songs and poems from Heidelberg and published them as an anthology titled *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Boy's Magic Horn). It became one of the most important collections of traditional folksongs and helped create a common German identity among the many small states that eventually merged to become Germany. Is something like this still possible today? We started by applying the same methods of old, using the media research tools of today. These included personal interviews on camera, Internet surveys and posters that people could write on which we pasted around the city, in front of schools, at bus stops and busy public places. Later our research team photographed all the posters and evaluated the results which ranged from formal poems that people had carefully copied onto the posters to wild scribbling. «You can't hold on to language» was the first sentence that wasn't even meant to be included in our research, but actually expressed someone's misgivings about our project. This sentence became one of the important slogans for the whole project.

Today the language of a city is harder to hold on to than in 1806. During our preliminary research in the Heidelberg quarter of Emmertsgrund in February 2006, we learned that over seventy different nationalities were represented there. That was news to us! We wanted to bring this polyphonic mixture into our theatre and allow the residents of the city to perform a large event of their own, with all the potential a complex theatre apparatus can offer — including theatre experts, rooms and rehearsal space. We also integrated the most costly ensemble of a theatre — the orchestra — into the project, as well as the opera chorus, the actors and all the technical departments. While planning this monstrous project, no one knew exactly what the performance would look like. At this point we were still looking for material. We couldn't answer many of the questions our colleagues had concerning the expense of the sets and costumes, the number of required rehearsals and the total number of participants until only a few weeks before the premiere. This was quite a challenge with regard to the planning structures that are necessary to operate a theatre!

By this point we had already achieved an important goal — making contact with the inhabitants of the city and getting them excited about the project. We were able to enlist the cooperation of the Haus der Jugend — our most important project partner. The dance instructor, who has taught over one hundred dancers, agreed to work as the choreographer, and the art instructor joined our artistic planning team and oversaw the research efforts. Young composers and their teachers from the College of Mannheim were asked to compose new pieces for the orchestra. Over three hundred letters describing the project were sent to all the important institutions in the city — schools, local clubs, music ensembles, choirs, carnival associations, sport groups, training centres, etc. However, speaking with the residents in person turned out to be the most effective way of spreading the word. We advertised our project at performances around the city, at school events and street festivals, receptions and over the phone, encouraging people to give us interviews and participate. Many wrote or called us to offer their songs and texts — poems they wrote themselves, folksongs from their home countries, rediscovered writings from their ancestors, schmaltzy songs from Heidelberg. A lady sang us a song that had been in her head for decades after she heard it from a stranger shortly following the war.

Every month we rehearsed new formats at *Camp Wunderhorn* where the city's residents were also invited to plan, decide and speak. Two experts came to the Camp to tell children the story about the *Boy's Magic Horn*. Two musicians from the orchestra improvised with the rappers, and together they created two rap songs for the entire orchestra. City residents were also encouraged to write down key words gathered in the research phase onto white costumes and the white stage covering. The Camp also gave people the chance to explore the winding corridors of the theatre and make it their own in the weeks that followed. As part of the performances, twenty-five residents led the audience along five routes through the theatre to its innermost confines where all the material for the project was presented in artistic installations. Each of them told their own personal story. One woman, for example, showed her group an old suitcase which she inherited from her father whom she had never met. The photos and texts inside altered the idealized image she had of him.

On the days of the performances, the city theatre truly became a «city theatre». The theatre and its square, where bands performed and immigrants sold their ethnic foods, became the stage for the city whose residents played the leading roles, telling their stories and sharing personal experiences. A place where the city was able to renew itself in an artistic process. This process of renewal will surely continue judging from the spontaneous connections that have formed as a result of the project — break dancers and the school band, an orchestra member and a composer, the rappers and a traditional Heidelberg song. Personally, however, the most important connection we created was that between the theatre and the city. The *New Magic Horn* concluded the 2006/07 season. And with the *New Magic Horn*, we opened the new season of 2007/08.

**www.dasneuewunderhorn.de**  
Olaf A. Schmitt is a dramaturge at the Theatre and Philharmonic Orchestra of Heidelberg. The concert programme the General Music Director Cornelius Meister and he developed for 2006/07 was nominated the best in Germany by the German Music Publishing Association. Schmitt received a scholarship from the Deutsche Bank Stiftung to attend the Akademie Musiktheater heute. In 2004, he co-published the book *Auf Brüche. Theaterarbeit zwischen Text und Situation* (Berlin, 2004) together with Patrick Primavesi.

## THE FEDERAL CULTURAL FOUNDATION TO EXPAND ITS THEATRE FUNDING PROGRAMMES

Germany's theatre industry is unique in its diversity, innovative character and responsibility to fostering its cultural heritage. Its richness is reflected in the wide spectrum of organizations and interest groups which actively work to create a vibrant theatre scene in Germany with a variety of specific themes and goals. These include city theatres that cater to regional audiences, large theatres that attract national audiences, a large number of theatre festivals and experimental projects organized by the independent theatre scene. German theatre is also enriched by major events such as the annual *Theatertreffen* in Berlin or spectacular theatre performances marking special occasions and anniversaries. The Federal Cultural Foundation supports all these facets of German theatre with a variety of funding programmes that are tailored to the specific needs of theatre artists.

The Federal Cultural Foundation funded *the* major theatre event of 2007 — the complete *Wallenstein* trilogy produced by the exceptional director Peter Stein and performed in a former Berlin brewery. In 2006 the Foundation helped fund the production of Bernd Alois Zimmermann's rarely performed monumental opera *The Soldiers* in the Bochum Jahrhunderthalle (Century Hall). This year's international *Theaterformen* festival in Hannover attracted large, mostly younger audiences and received rave reviews from the critics. And in November 2007, the international *Impulse* festival for independent theatre in North Rhine-Westphalia is sure to provide the theatre world with another memorable event.

These are only a few examples of projects that demonstrate the wide spectrum of the Foundation's funding activities and emphasize one of the important goals of the Federal Cultural Foundation. We at the Foundation are strongly interested in strengthening international cooperation inasmuch as it benefits the diversity and continuing development of theatre forms. There is no limit to the ideas or the size of the applicant pool when the goal is to involve all the creative thinkers in the field of theatre. Large theatres and alternative venues, newcomers and established stars, famous directors, young playwrights, general theatre directors and theatre scholars can apply for funding from the Federal Cultural Foundation to develop international theatre projects which could never be realized without additional third-party funding because of their unusual requirements. However, the Federal Cultural Foundation cannot provide funding to cover regular theatre operating costs.

Since it was established, the application-based General Project Funding department has provided a total of 13.4 million euro to 131 performing arts projects. For more information about General Project Funding, please visit our website [www.kulturstiftung-bund.de](http://www.kulturstiftung-bund.de). One of the Foundation's most unique funding programmes is the *Home Game* fund. The goal of the fund is to encourage theatres to develop projects that appeal to residents who normally do not attend

## THEATRE [SELECTION]

At its 11th joint session, the Federal Cultural Foundation's Jury awarded 4 million euro to 34 new projects, 10 of which were theatre projects. The two described below will take place this coming autumn.

**road theatre** Transatlantic theatre project *Artistic and stage director:* Ronald Marx (USA) | *Project concept and development:* Ronald Marx (USA), Dagmar Domrös (D), Birgit Lengens (D) | *Participating artists:* Claudia Rohrmoser (A), Marcel Schobel (A), Roland Schimmelpfennig and others | *Venues and schedule:* **Berlin prologue:** Berliner Festspiele; 26 September 2007 | **Berlin epilogue:** 29 March — 15 April 2008, Haus der Berliner Festspiele and other venues | **New York (USA):** Performance Space 122, 9 — 13 October 2007  
**US Tour:** 15 Oct. — 2 Dec. 2007, **NEW FRONTIERS:** New York City, New York (4 performances) | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 16 Oct. | Cincinnati, Ohio, 19 Oct. | Louisville, Kentucky, 20 Oct. | Edmonton, Kentucky, 22 Oct. | Nashville, Tennessee, 24 Oct. | Atlanta, Georgia, 26 Oct. | Clarksville, Georgia, 28 Oct. | Birmingham, Alabama, 30 Oct. | Memphis, Tennessee, 1 Nov. | Jackson, Mississippi, 3 Nov. | Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 5 Nov. | New Orleans, Louisiana, 7 Nov. | Paris, Texas, 9 Nov. | Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 11 Nov. | Austin, Texas, 13 Nov. | El Paso, Texas, 15 Nov. | Santa Fe, New Mexico, 17 Nov. | Albuquerque, New Mexico, 18 Nov. | Phoenix, Arizona, 20 Nov. | Clarkdale, Arizona, 21 Nov. | Las Vegas, Nevada, 26 Nov. | Death Valley Junction, California, 27 Nov. | Los Angeles, California (3 performances, 30 Nov. — 2 Dec.)

Following a «prologue» in Berlin, the production company *German Theater Abroad* (GTA) of Berlin will venture on an unusual American tour of Roland Schimmelpfennig's play *Start Up*, a black comedy about culture clash and the American dream of young German immigrants. The GTA will take a bus across the United States from New York City to Los Angeles, rehearse the piece with local high school students and perform it wherever they find an available vacant space. Following their tour, the GTA will perform an epilogue in Germany based on what they experienced in the United States.

theatre and motivate them to actively participate in theatre projects. Twenty-six projects have already received *Home Game* funding. Because the response has been so positive at the theatres which have organized *Home Game* projects, the Federal Cultural Foundation has decided to extend the *Home Game* funding period by three years until 2011.

You can find a list of projects which have received *Home Game* funding and other info regarding the *Home Game* fund on our website [www.kulturstiftung-bund.de](http://www.kulturstiftung-bund.de).

## NEW: FUND FOR INTERNATIONAL THEATRE PARTNERSHIPS

There are very few theatres in Germany which cooperate with foreign theatres on a regular basis. Initiating cooperative projects with theatres abroad is a daunting challenge. Since the artistic staff members at theatres have their hands full taking care of the daily operation of their own theatres, they generally have little time and financial resources to invest in research and informational trips. In discussions with the Federal Cultural Foundation, general theatre directors, representatives from the German Theatre Association, directors and dramaturges, many have expressed the wish to effectively strengthen the international cooperation between foreign theatres and German municipal and state theatres. Therefore, the Federal Cultural Foundation has developed the *Fund for International Theatre Partnerships* that will enable German municipal and state theatres to establish longer-term partnerships with foreign theatres (for two or three seasons) and encourage the exchange of artistic personnel. The partnership should culminate in a joint theatre production.

The plan is to exchange artistic personnel in the first year, have them present a guest performance at each theatre in the second year, and then collaborate on a joint production presented at both theatres in the third year. The fund intends to establish a total of 30 partnerships between 2009 and 2012.

To establish a partnership in the 2009/2010 season, applicants should submit their funding application by 15 October 2008. Additional funding is available for travel expenses incurred as a result of preparing for the application. More information and an online application will be available on our website [www.kulturstiftung-bund.de](http://www.kulturstiftung-bund.de) in November 2007.

**what's next** Theatre project for young artists as part of the *Spielart Festival Curators:* Tilmann Broszat, Romeo Castellucci (I), Tim Etchells (GB), Jan Lauwers (B), Johan Simons (NL) | *Participants/artists:* Simone Aughterlony (CH/NL), Nico Çelik, Maarten Seghers (B), Orthographi (I) | *Venues:* Munich Kammerspiele; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Tanzquartier Wien (A); Theaterhaus Gessnerallee, Zürich (CH); Forum Freies Theater, Düsseldorf; Kampnagel Hamburg; schauspielFrankfurt, Frankfurt am Main | *Schedule:* 15 November — 1 December 2007

Learning and training situations, artistic production processes and social experiences have influenced theatre makers in a way that has also hampered cross-generational understanding. Romeo Castellucci, Tim Etchells, Jan Lauwers and Johan Simons are established theatre makers with an international background who will work together with selected young, talented artists on a joint theatre production. The goal is to initiate a cross-generational dialogue to motivate experienced artists to become more acquainted with the situation and ideas of the up-and-coming generation. Conversely, the young artists from the fields of theatre, directing and performance will benefit from the experience and knowledge of the older generation. The older artists will be integrated into rather «atypical» projects and will often find themselves in entirely new situations, e.g., Jan Lauwers with an exhibition, Tim Etchells with a children's project, etc. In addition to the artistic, practical collaboration, the project will also stage public dialogues in which younger and older artists discuss the past and present differences in artistic socialization.

# WHEN A VILLAGE GOES CULTURAL

With its *Fund to Strengthen Citizen Involvement in the Culture of the New German Länder (New Länder Fund)*, the Federal Cultural Foundation supports projects which strongly emphasize citizen involvement in culture at a local and regional level. Earlier this year, the Foundation held a meeting titled *Involvement in Culture — Perspectives in East Germany* for the administrators of the 89 projects which have received funding from the *New Länder Fund* to date. The purpose of the meeting was to intensify the exchange of information and experience among the organizations, evaluate the development of the projects supported by the *New Länder Fund* and discuss perspectives for citizen involvement in culture. The meeting took place as part of the festivities at this year's *Stelzen Festival BEI REUTH* which is also supported by the fund.

BY  
ULRIKE  
GROPP

**O**n a rainy Saturday afternoon in July, the two of them sit side by side — the star of the day, Henry Schneider, the Leipzig Gewandhaus violist and initiator of the *Stelzen Festival*, and next to him, perhaps the star of tomorrow, Christina Tast, who will produce *Midsummer Night's Dream* as a musical theatre piece with professional musicians from Berlin and amateurs from the Brandenburg village of Prignitz and the surrounding region later this year. The production will feature singing, performing, dancing and celebrating «in and around our festival theatre — which, by the way, used to be the former pig stall in our village's farming collective». Christina Tast remarks with a hint of pride.

Fifteen years following the big bang of the *Stelzen Festival*, Henry Schneider can look back at his work like a veteran festival producer, while Tast, an interior designer, married, two children, a resident of a Brandenburg village (pop. 70), is anxiously looking forward to opening her third annual festival *Village Goes Opera*. Neither of them are media professionals — or at least, not yet. However, as representatives of numerous projects, associations and networks in the East German states, both Schneider and Tast make a great impression sitting at the podium at the Federal Cultural Foundation press conference. They discuss the events of the last 24 hours during which they met with forty other individuals in an informal conference of regional cultural organizations.

Not very many journalists have taken the trouble to travel to this region where Saxony, Thuringia, Bavaria, and the Czech Republic meet, sixteen kilometres away from Plauen. However, depending on their character, the cultural organizers from the five East German states are either quietly amazed or deeply satisfied that somebody out there is interested in how they do what they do despite all the obstacles.

Tast, Schneider and their colleagues clearly represent a trend that is not all that new. Sociologists and social scientists have long referred to it as «empowerment» — particularly in their debates concerning the «third sector». It was just a matter of time until the issue was taken up in cultural-political discourse. At the same time, cultural producers — especially those in the new East German states — belong to a new species of «social entrepreneurs» who are playing an increasingly significant role in the face of federal funding cutbacks. It seems the term is about to become a new cultural-political buzzword, as so many other terms have before, and will surely spark important conferences and thick publications in the future. It doesn't really matter whether people call Henry Schneider and Christina Tast «social entrepreneurs of the art and cultural scene» or simply «cultural entrepreneurs». In fact, they probably don't care one way or the other.

## When practice defies theory...

According to the workshop speaker in Stelzen, the more crucial issue, which she herself has personally experienced, is that the (cultural) life in eastern Germany would be more dismal and less exciting without this species. Without people like Schneider, Tast and many others in East Germany, culture would simply wither away. Although citizen interest groups have been actively participating in the culture of East Germany for over five years and have had great success and occasional failures, there is a general lack of public awareness of this citizen involvement (with the exception of the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche in Dresden), and, has received even less publicity in (West German) cultural-political circles and administrations.

In villages and towns which usually make the news when crisis hits, cultural producers are able to develop the necessary conditions, structures and cultural resources through non-paid volunteer work and well-organized networks. At best (and Stelzen is a fitting example), they can achieve what business sponsors, preservationists, urban and regional planners and cultural policymakers agonize over — they get people and businesses working together, increase the quality of life in godforsaken regions and city quarters, create new social relationships and sometimes jobs — and above all, they keep art and culture alive.

And when they're successful, they are no more or less than «real entrepreneurs», even though they're seldom appreciated as such. Either because no one has noticed what they've been doing, or their projects don't fit into the usual categories. The only difference between a cultural manager and a recognized member of the chamber of commerce is that the former does not personally profit from their entrepreneurialism. At least not in a financial respect. But definitely in a human, artistic and social respect. And that beyond all measure.

## Modern madrigals: tractors, hydraulics, chainsaws

It would be hard to imagine a better place and a better time to hold a long weekend festival than in the small town of Stelzen near Reuth at the end of June. It offers a perfect opportunity to focus on the importance of voluntary work for art and cultural institutions in the new German *Länder* and to take stock of one of the Federal Cultural Foundation's more unusual funding programmes. Above all, it provides a meeting place for the organizers of the remarkable East German projects which the Federal Cultural Foundation is supporting through its *Fund to Strengthen Citizen Involvement in the Culture of the New German Länder*.

Some have analyzed or at least predicted the death of culture in the new East German states — but in Stelzen, culture is alive and well. The first night of events that kick off the 15th annual Stelzen Festival is loud and cheerful. Over 1,000 guests sit on wooden benches in the wooden festival barn and watch this year's performance of the *Farm Machine Symphony*. The violas and saxophones sob to the deep diesel sound of the fire-red «concert tractor». Two broad-shouldered men enter with wailing chainsaw crescendos. The result is an unusual poetic collage of farm machinery, sounds and rhythms resembling something between Stomp and Ravel. The musicians in concert tailcoats share the stage with normal villagers wearing casual clothes. The gentle chainsaw melodies of the orchestra are accompanied by funky bass beats and electronically amplified farm equipment. This is what both young and old enjoy, not only the «big boys» performing up on stage — the seriousness of great, classical music combined with the archaic moments of an unbridled total art work in a new Land Art style. And the entire event brings up the question — how is something like this possible with (practically) no federal subsidies?

«Conceived by idealists and artists, developed by volunteers, and built with outside donations and the inner strength of the village» — the recipe used in Stelzen reads like a modern heroic epic. And not only in Stelzen. In many of the stories of how East German cultural projects were established, the contradiction between the real and imagined misery and the reflection of beauty and utopia in art and culture often results in a dynamic force. The snazzy commercialization and production of cultural and artistic events, that smooth, refined look one can find everywhere, hasn't (yet) made it to Stelzen. For urban audiences, the events are that much more intriguing as they guarantee an experience unlike any other elsewhere.

## Cultural-political dynamite?

In view of projects like the *Stelzen Festival BEI REUTH* and *Village Goes Opera*, we can't help asking ourselves, how do they do it? Of course, it's customary for visiting city dwellers to congratulate and praise organizers like Schneider and Tast when their performances are successful. However, many people, and in particular, cultural policymakers, have little time or interest to ask about the story behind the project — the «making of», so to speak. It's much easier to dole out praise and nice words because they don't cost anything.

What many of them may have overlooked, however, is that among cultural experts in central Germany and in the neighbouring Bavarian region of Franconia, «Stelzen» has become a synonym for a new, rural East German type of «cultural development planning». Though these planning efforts have no money at their disposal, the ideas, creativity, personal commitment and highly-competent networks that

have evolved over years or even decades develop complex projects and concepts that challenge conventional cultural-political thinking — and at times, push it to the extreme.

## The new-old liaison between the city and the country

Of course, after bestowing such praise, it's important to mention several requirements that play a decisive role here. There are personal connections, saying and doing the right thing at the right time, finding «suitable partners», lucky coincidences and an occasional financial miracle. And in the case of summertime cultural events in the country, a close connection between the urban milieu and the rural bio- and sociotope is absolutely essential. It's not surprising, therefore, that the *spiritus rector* of the Stelzen Festival lives in the village of Stelzen and only travels to Leipzig when his job at the Gewandhaus beckons. «Stelzen» would have never become what it is without the impulses from the city. Not only did he and his friends in Leipzig come up with the idea of holding a concert series in the country, but his architect friends in the trade fair city planned the entire construction of the festival barn at no charge.

A similar symbiosis between the city and the country was a catalyst for the *Village Goes Opera*. Christina Tast has lived in Klein Leppin for the past 15 years although her family has a second «base» in Berlin only an hour away. The urban-rural connection is obviously favourable for all the projects that take place in the country. It is essential, however, that the project organizers have a secure financial footing, be it a regular salary, a relatively secure pension, or a spouse who earns the money.

The cultural project «made in Stelzen» has produced a festival barn, a large, privately initiated cultural venue that conforms to the reality of a rural setting. There is no concrete floor in the barn. The toilets, like at an amusement park, are outside on a flatbed truck. There is neither a cloakroom nor lobby. The fact that the back wall of the building hasn't been completed yet doesn't matter, and actually, only increases the fun as the marching band can enter the building with ease out of the moonlit night and perform the finale of the *Farm Machine Symphony*.

And thanks to this missing back wall, our thoughts can wander more freely — which is the key difference between a village like Stelzen that anxiously looks forward to its cultural festival for half the year and any number of other villages here in the Vogtland or in Saxony, Mecklenburg or Thuringia whose only highlight is a traditional village festival. The thought that wanders out the back wall and into the night is the question «Where is the much-lamented crumbling cultural landscape of East Germany in 2007?» How do we explain the pioneering spirit, indefatigability, the courage of these penniless cultural artists (in terms of subsidies) in light of the libraries, galleries, theatres, social and youth cultural centres that are closing their doors in cities left and right in eastern Germany?

What do these successful individuals have that other projects don't? Those projects that prematurely throw in the towel, get discouraged by the lack of resources and bureaucratic red tape (e.g., filling out long funding applications to only receive 150 euro per year), or do not have the necessary contacts to attract the attention of jury members or talent scouts? What is the secret of Stelzen's success? What experience and know-how does it have that can be adapted and applied to other projects? And in this system of coincidences, when do such success stories reach the end of their tether? When, if at all, does commercialization put an end to their magic?

## Stocktaking to prevent loss

In accordance with paragraph 35 of the unification treaty that pledges to preserve the cultural substance of East Germany, it would be fitting to look back — especially for West Germans — at what has been achieved thus far. For example, the German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt/Main recently presented an exhibition titled *Neu Bau Land* (New Building Land) that featured an impressive array of public and

private construction projects in the new German *Länder*. What made it impressive was not simply the curators' choice of research institutes, schools, libraries, theatres and administrative buildings (for there are surely just as many examples of unsuccessful building projects). There was also a feeling of relief. The mid-term assessment of the «durable» art of construction demonstrated something that Germans often overlook, i.e., German unification has not only generated extra financial burden and disillusionment, but also cultural, artistic, building and technological achievements, for which countries around the world admire us.

If we were to document the status quo of East German cultural institutions and independent projects in the face of their uncertain future, the result would be quite different than the stocktaking in the architecturally critical *Neu Bau Land* exhibition. Many of the same stock-taking approaches were used by the project administrators in a workshop hosted by the Federal Cultural Foundation's *Fund to Strengthen Citizen Involvement in the Culture of the New German Länder* which reported on the experiences, current needs and success stories in the East German cultural landscape. Although the administrators could only provide a general impression of this vital process with flyers, stories and brochures, one could clearly distinguish the outlines of the «typical» cultural history of the East German cultural laboratory. The *Neu Bau Land* exhibition with its architectural photos had it easier.

## The social quintessence

It's always the same — the age-old but ever-new experience of people from different walks of life and social classes, who are fascinated by art and culture, sharing a (cultural) experience that creates new energy and electrifies them. The feeling of «We got this thing up and running together». It is an unreligious, but spiritual, fundamental experience — creating brilliance from supposed misery through one's own strength in the midst of all the talk of crisis. It fulfils a deep-seated need and attracts people to the places of cultural crystallization. Regardless if one is the producer or the viewer, since those who attend such events often feel more like participants than consumers.

All the workshop participants could tell similar stories of constantly re-occurring magical moments that brought them to where they are today. A magical moment is when the village children in fairy costumes (and wearing wellies) hold an opera ballet in the pig stall. Or when a church that had fallen into disrepair becomes a concert hall once a month.

Take Stelzen, for example. Thousands of people travel there every year. Though the majority lives in the surrounding region, the impact on the local hotels is significant. Or take Klein Leppin. Instead of the 200 guests they had expected, more than 1,000 showed up in the first year of the festival. Numbers like these attract people's attention — at a time when the rarest resource in cultural life is public awareness and the most valuable is the willingness to travel from point A to point B to see a cultural event and then pay for it. Museum and theatre directors everywhere could tell their own (sad) tale about this. Unless they can afford to purchase the MOMA label.

Ulrike Gropp is a freelance radio and print journalist in Leipzig. In addition to producing radio pieces for the WDR and Deutschlandfunk, Gropp contributes articles to the German-Polish magazine *DIALOG*, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and the Leipzig city magazine *KREUZER*.

# POWER AND FRIENDSHIP

Although Germany's political relationship to Russia has cooled down as of late, the Foundation of Prussian Palaces and Gardens Berlin-Brandenburg is preparing the exhibition *Power and Friendship. Berlin — St. Petersburg 1800–1860* in cooperation with renowned Russian institutions, the State Hermitage in St. Petersburg and the Peterhof State Museum Reserve. The exhibition will be shown at the Martin Gropius Building in Berlin from 13 March until 26 May 2008, and then will open in St. Petersburg with a different curatorial focus. With this project, the Federal Cultural Foundation continues its support of exhibitions on German-Russian cultural relations following the large exhibitions *Berlin — Moscow 1900–1950*, *Moscow — Berlin 1950–2000* which provided a significant impulse to the German-Russian cultural dialogue in 2004. According to the art historian Ada Raev, the new exhibition *Power and Friendship* re-examines a cultural-historic epoch of European history which has long been neglected.

BY  
ADA  
RAEV

Since Mikhail Gorbachev and *perestroika*, Germans and especially Berliners have had the opportunity to rediscover the art of Russia — a country that many Germans had learned to fear as a result of the historic catastrophes of the 20th century, such as the Russian Revolution, Stalinism, the Nazis, World War II and the Cold War. Yet even in the 19th century, many people hedged a prejudice toward Russia as being «different» than Western Europe, a cliché which culminated in Winston Churchill's claim that «Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma». The relationship to Russia was marked by both uneasiness and fascination.

The numerous exhibitions of the Russian avant-garde in the 1970s finally enabled Western audiences to better acquaint themselves with Russian art. In their formal boldness, the breathtaking works by Chagall, Kandinsky, Malevich, Popova and Rodchenko demonstrated that Russian artists were firmly anchored in the development of modern art and illustrated the national sources of their art. However, even today, exhibition titles seem to imply continuing ignorance and vague expectations regarding Russia and its culture. For instance, take the successful exhibition shown in Saarbrücken and Berlin titled *In search of Russia. The painter Ilya Repin*, or the exhibition at the Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Bonn this summer, titled *Russia's soul. Icons, paintings, drawings from the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow*. In 2003 the exhibition hall in Bonn and the Martin Gropius Building hosted a cultural-historical exhibition, titled *The Kremlin. Divine Glory and Czarist Splendour* that featured spectacular items which are rarely shown outside of Russia. The emphasis on piety and splendour in the exhibition title was a conscious reference to timeless Byzantinism and the official cultural parameters with which Russia under Vladimir Putin chooses to portray itself both domestically and internationally.

Within ten years (1995/96 and 2003/04) the Martin Gropius Building showcased two major exhibitions of Russian art. It hit a nerve among audiences in that it didn't simply present 20th century Russian art as «something in its own right», but depicted it as running parallel to the artistic developments in Germany. I am referring, of course, to the exhibitions *Berlin — Moscow 1900–1950* and *Berlin — Moscow 1950–2000*, the second of which was funded by the Federal Cultural Foundation. While the second sometimes confused and overwhelmed the viewers because of the non-chronological concept and curatorial meticulousness, the first was all the more fascinating as it compared various artistic genres, including literature, music, photography and film along chronologically parallel timelines. The planned exhibition *Power and Friendship. Berlin — St. Petersburg 1800–1860* once again focuses on the relationship between history and art and expands on the German-Russian connection established in the previous exhibitions. The emphasis, however, shifts away from Moscow to the city that has long been called the «window to Europe» — St. Petersburg, founded in 1703 and the capital of the Russian empire from 1712 to 1917.

The exhibition *Power and Friendship. Berlin — St. Petersburg 1800–1860* emphasizes both the political calculation and the cultural activities which influenced Prussian-Russian relations. The Napoleonic Wars that culminated in the Holy Alliance between Russia, Prussia and Austria, and the revolutionary events of 1830 and 1848 gave the political relations a pan-European dimension. Allied in their fight against Napoleon, Czar Alexander I, King Friedrich Wilhelm III and Queen Luise became friends after the Russian grand duke Nicolas Pavlovich (later Czar Nicolas I) betrothed Princess Charlotte of Prussia in 1817. After his bride (known thereafter as Alexandra Feodorovna) converted to the Russian Orthodox faith, the relations between Prussia and Russia gained a very personal, amiable character. The exhibition will show how the cultural atmosphere in Berlin and St. Petersburg were influenced by these political and personal ties.

An especially interesting aspect was the active cultural exchange that involved architects such as Vasily Petrovich Stasov and Karl-Friedrich Schinkel, intellectuals like Alexander von Humboldt and Vasily Shukovskiy, painters like Franz Krüger, Eduard Gaertner and Grigori Chernetsov and well-known sculptors such as Christian Daniel Rauch,

Carl Friedrich Wichmann and Baron Peter (Piotr) Clodt von Jürgensburg. The expansion of the cultural landscapes of Berlin and Potsdam, St. Petersburg and its surroundings exhibit a number of parallels and occasional «souvenirs», such as the carefully restored Russian village of Alexandrovka in Potsdam, canvas, paper and porcelain souvenirs depicting royal events like the Lalla Rookh festival of 1821, the festival of the White Rose in Potsdam in 1829 and the Kalisch Parade in 1835. The travel drawings by Friedrich Wilhelm IV also revive a politically conservative era that was influenced, nonetheless, by the harbingers of modernity. One such harbinger was the separation of the «public» and «private» spheres. This was most evident in the contrast between the large, late classical, city planning projects and the more Biedermeier-like design of the living quarters used by the Russian and Prussian royal families, both of which are featured in separate exhibition rooms containing architectural drawings and interior design plans.

An objectified view of reality gradually gained acceptance in both Germany and Russia as new classes of the population were considered worthy of artistic portrayal. However, the glorious depiction of noble culture remained prevalent as representative portraits of monarchs, monumental decorative vases and exquisite malachite pieces demonstrate. In contrast, the exhibition will also show photographs of the Crimean War which not only marked the birth of a new form of media, but also heralded a new political era during which German-Russian relations took on a harsher tone.

The exhibition will show that, for a half century, Russia — so rich in natural resources — and Prussia — rather modest in this respect — were involved in an intense multifarious dialogue aimed at addressing the challenges of modernisation taking place in all areas of life. Evidence of industrial progress and the human power of invention can be found in the romantic reveries of both countries with their arcadian and nationally connotative motifs. In today's expanded Europe and in Russia, which is undergoing dynamic change, the cultural climate is determined by parameters other than weddings and military skirmishes. Even personal friendship between heads of state has little influence on cultural relations. Let us hope that the cultural cooperation taking place today will contribute to better political relations tomorrow, based on more than romantic wishful thinking or political calculation.

Ada Raev, born in Berlin in 1955, studied Art History and later received her doctorate from the Lomonosov University in Moscow. She has worked as a freelance lecturer at the Art Historical Seminar at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin since 1999. The book *Kurschwankungen. Russische Kunst im Wertesystem der europäischen Moderne* (Course Fluctuations. Russian Art in the Value System of European Modernity) by Ada Raev & Isabel Wünsche (eds.) will be published by the Lukas Verlag Berlin in 2007.

## IMAGE AND SPACE PROJECTS [SELECTION]

At its 11th joint session in April 2007, the Federal Cultural Foundation's Jury awarded funding to 34 new projects, 13 of which feature the fine arts. The following are several upcoming exhibitions which will take place between October 2007 and April 2008. For an overview of all the projects selected at the 11th Jury session, please visit our website [www.kulturstiftung-bund.de](http://www.kulturstiftung-bund.de).

**eco — media** Exhibition Artistic directors: Sabine Himmelsbach, Yvonne Volkart | Participants / artists: Ieva Auzina / Esther Polak (LT/NL), Critical Art Ensemble and Beatriz da Costa (USA), Free Soil (USA/DK/AU), Tue Greenfort (DK), Christina Hemauer / Roman Keller (CH), infossil (D), Natalie Jeremijenko (USA), Franz John (D), Christoph Keller (D), Tea Mäkipää (FIN), Eva and Franco Mattes a.k.a. 0100101110101101.org (I), MVRDV (NL), Inigo Mangano-Ovalle (ES), Andrea Polli (USA), Sabrina Raaf (USA), Transnational Temps (ES/F/USA), Insa Winkler (D), Yonic (CH/BR) | Venue and schedule: Edith Russ Site for Media Art, Oldenburg, 13 Oct. 2007—13 Jan. 2008

The fragility of ecosystems, their sustainability, and alternative and renewable energy sources form the basis of this exhibition that focuses on the role art and New Media can play as communication systems for our understanding of ecology. The relationship between humans and animals and organic and inorganic substances is increasingly regarded as a delicately balanced relationship of «give and take» which requires additional forms of scientific documentation. By interconnecting art, science and technology, the artists will develop new ways of portraying communication and interaction in an ecological system.

**from sparks to pixels** The development of contemporary art in combination with interactive and digital media Exhibition Artistic director: Richard Castelli | Artists: Dumb Type (D), minim++ (D), Studio Azzurro (IT), Romy Achituv (IL), Jean Michel Bruyère (F), Olafur Eliasson (DK), Kai Fuhrmann, Doug Hall (USA), Nam June Paik, Jeffrey Shaw (AUS), Saburo Teshigawara (J), James Turrell (USA), and others | Venue and schedule: Martin Gropius Building, Berlin: 28 Oct. 2007—14 Jan. 2008

This large exhibition in the Martin Gropius Building in Berlin will focus on the relationship between current forms of art and technological energy, featuring top international artists, known for their large-scale, technically advanced interactive and digital media works. Using the medium of art, the exhibition will present the pixel as the cell of electronic images and the electronic image as the carrier of an energy form which no longer bears any resemblance to fossil fuels, and demonstrate how pixels and electronic images have radically called our ideas of controlling energy into question. In addition to commissioning several new works, this exhibition will bring many large-scale and highly complicated, technical installations to Germany for the first time.

**islands & ghettos** Exhibition, symposiums and accompanying programme Artistic director: Johan Holten (DK) | Curators and researchers: Stefan Horn (D), Kevin Mitchell (USA), George Katodrytis (GR), Hubert Klumpner (A) and Alfredo Brillembourg (V) | Artists: Ursula Biemann (CH), Angela Sanders (CH), Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber (A), Simone Bitton (A), Stefano Boeri and Multiplicity (I), Christoph Büchel (CH), Oliver Chanarin (GB) and Adam Broomberg (ZA), Nikolaj Larsen (DK), Bettina Lockemann, Dorit Margreiter (A), Marjetica Potrč (SLO), Daniela Rossel (MEX), Andreas Siekmann, Vangelos Vlahos (GR), Silke Wagner, Carey Young (GB) and others | Venues and schedule: Heidelberger Kunstverein, Mannheimer Kunstverein, Forum 76-Heidelberg, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität-Heidelberg, 1 Mar.—14 Sep. 2008

In a globalised world, conventional, state-territorial boundaries are increasingly being replaced by new, private, economic and high-tech security-enforced borders. The international project *Islands & Ghettos* addresses the phenomenon of territorial borders that both enclose and exclude. In an exhibition featuring works by 35 artists, the Heidelberg Art Association examines two examples of the social «islandization» trend — the artificial archipelago off the coast of Dubai which represents an aesthetic extreme of social demarcation, and the «gated communities» of Caracas where the upper and middle classes fend off the poverty of the «barrios» with the latest security technology. The participating artists will discuss the results of their joint research with local architects and urban developers at various symposiums.

**könig lustik!?** Jérôme Bonaparte and the Model State — the Kingdom of Westphalia Exhibition Venue and schedule: Museum Fridericianum Kassel, 19 Mar.—29 Jun. 2008

The main figure of this exhibition is Napoleon's brother, the French monarch Jérôme Bonaparte (1784–1860), whom Germans mockingly called «König Lustik» (King Happy). Thanks to Jérôme's efforts, his brief reign resulted in significant cultural achievements in the fields of music, theatre, architecture and the arts and crafts. This period of splendour was tarnished, however, by Napoleon's decision to concentrate Europe's art treasures in the Louvre. As a consequence, the landgrave collections of Kassel suffered heavy losses. This cultural-historic exhibition is the first to investigate both the positive and negative aspects of this historically unique model state. With approximately 750 objects, the exhibition will provide visitors a comprehensive view of the multifaceted history of the Kingdom of Westphalia.

**lovis corinth and the birth of modernity** Exhibition Artistic director: Serge Lemoine (F), Hans-Werner Schmidt, Ulrike Lorenz | Venues and schedule: Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 31 Mar.—22 Jun. 2008; Museum of Fine Arts, Leipzig, 9 Jul.—12 Oct. 2008; Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie Regensburg, 9 Nov. 2008—15 Feb. 2009

Lovis Corinth belonged to a class of his own. He was an artist situated between tradition and modernity and his works influenced numerous young artists well into the 20th century. In commemoration of Corinth's 150th anniversary, this large retrospective will go on tour to Leipzig, Regensburg and Paris with works from the collections at the Leipzig Museum of Fine Arts and the Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie in Regensburg. The exhibition of Corinth's works at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris will be the most extensive of its kind to ever be shown in France. The exhibition will examine Corinth's influence on 20th-century painting, and each venue will have its own specific emphasis. For example, in Leipzig the exhibition will point out references in Corinth's later works that reveal common ties to other artists, such as Sighard Gille, Bernhard Heisig and Willi Sitte.

**yevgeni khaldei — a retrospective** Exhibition Artistic director: Ernst Volland | Participants: Jacqueline Köster, Ingrid Fenner, Enno Kaufbold, Bernd Ulrich, Bernd Hüppauf, Peter Jahn, Heinz Krimmer | Venue and schedule: Martin Gropius Building Berlin, 1 Apr.—15 Jul. 2008; Centre of Contemporary Art Kiev (UA), September—October 2008

Yevgeni Khaldei's photo of a Russian soldier raising a red flag over the Reichstag in Berlin is one of the icons of 20th-century photography. Ten years after his death, this Berlin exhibition will present a major retrospective of Khaldei's photography which is so closely tied to German history in a biographical, historical and aesthetic sense. Audiences in Germany, Russia and Ukraine will have the opportunity to view the exhibition which pays tribute to this great artist — a Ukrainian Jew who was a victim of both German and Stalinist anti-Semitism.

# NEWS

## announcing the first dance education biennale

The first *Dance Education Biennale* will take place from 27 February to 4 March 2008. Financed by *Dance Plan Germany* and co-produced by the Theater Hebbel am Ufer, the project is conceived as a platform similar to the *Theatertreffen* for acting schools. Students of state-funded dance schools will have the opportunity to present their newest dance works to the general public. The presentations will be accompanied by a workshop programme and a symposium for students and instructors. William Forsythe will present his multi-media project *Motion Bank* that will serve as an educational tool for dancers and choreographers. Following its premiere in Berlin, the Biennale will be presented at a different city in Germany every two years. For more information, please visit [www.tanzplan-deutschland.de](http://www.tanzplan-deutschland.de).

## dance congress germany's «knowledge in motion» now available

Last year the Haus der Kulturen der Welt hosted the *Dance Congress Germany*, the first convention of this magnitude in Germany in recent decades. A new book about the congress, titled *Knowledge in Motion (Wissen in Bewegung)*, has now been published in German and English by the transcript Verlag as part of the «Tanzscripte» series, edited by Prof. Gabriele Brandstetter und Prof. Gabriele Klein. The book includes articles by Irene Sieben, Claudia Jeschke, Norbert Servos and Jason Beechey with feature articles on «Dance History and Reconstruction», «Body Knowledge and Memory», and much more. In Scott de Lahunta's interview with Meg Stuart, the choreographer talks about her newest works and in «Touching Instead of Groping», Felix Ruckert explains his ideas about participatory theatre. The publication was presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair in September 2007.

## an instrument for every child begins at 145 primary schools in the ruhr region

The programme *An Instrument for Every Child* has begun in thirty-three communities in the Ruhr region. Initiated by the Federal Cultural Foundation in cooperation with the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia and the GLS Treuhand Foundations for the Future, the project now involves 6,762 first graders in 145 primary schools. The music teachers present a different instrument to the children every week — ranging from the violin and accordion to the baglama. At the end of the school year, the children can choose the instrument they would like to learn during their primary school years. *An Instrument for Every Child* is the Federal Cultural Foundation's contribution to the European Capital of Culture 2010 programme. By 2010 all the primary school children in the Ruhr region will have had the opportunity to learn an instrument of their choice. The project office in Bochum is responsible for providing teaching materials and support to music schools and primary schools, coordinating the purchase of instruments and offering continuing education courses for participating teachers. If you have any questions or would like additional information about the programme, please write to: *Jedem Kind ein Instrument*, Willy-Brandt-Platz 1–3, 44787 Bochum, Tel: +49 (0) 234/5417470. You can find more information at [www.kulturstiftung-bund.de/jedemkind](http://www.kulturstiftung-bund.de/jedemkind) or [jedemkind@kulturstiftung-bund.de](mailto:jedemkind@kulturstiftung-bund.de).

## exhibition national treasures of germany. from luther to bauhaus opens in warsaw

More than twenty renowned cultural institutions in eastern Germany contributed works from their collections for an exhibition that was displayed at the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Bonn in 2005 and the Budapest National Art Gallery in 2006. The exhibition, organized by the *Conference of National Cultural Institutions* (KNK), will now be shown at the Royal Castle of Wawel in Warsaw from 30 October 2007 to 13 January 2008. Approximately 300 stunning artworks and natural and scientific exhibits will be on display. The exhibition presents the changes that have taken place in museums and collections in a European context and shows the significant impulses which originated in eastern Germany.

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## our website

The Federal Cultural Foundation offers an extensive, bilingual website where you can access detailed information about the Foundation's activities, responsibilities, funded projects, programmes and much more.

Visit us at: [www.kulturstiftung-bund.de](http://www.kulturstiftung-bund.de)

## the complete works by alexander kluge on dvd

In 1932, the year Alexander Kluge was born, the first film festival in the world was held in Venice. In the 75 years since, Alexander Kluge has received a «Lion» three times. In commemoration of its own anniversary and Kluge's birthday, the Venice film festival has commissioned the director to present a retrospective of his cinematic works. The Federal Cultural Foundation, the Goethe-Institut and the Filmmuseum in Munich have jointly developed and now released the first eight volumes of Kluge's complete works at the opening of the festival. A total of 15 DVDs will present the vast range of cinematic work created by one of the most multi-talented and influential filmmakers, writers and media philosophers in German history — from his early feature films and montages to his more recent TV productions. For more information and purchasing details, please visit [www.edition-filmmuseum.com](http://www.edition-filmmuseum.com).

## world cinema fund funds first project in africa

The *World Cinema Fund (WCF)* has recently awarded production funding to several new film projects, including the Israeli documentary *Justice Must Be Seen* by the director Ra'anan Alexandrowicz and the Iranian full-length feature film *The House under the Water*, directed by Sepideh Farsi. For the first time, the WCF is funding a feature film production in Angola titled *O Grande Kilapy (Le Coup du Siècle)*, directed by Zezé Gamboa. Since it was founded in October 2004, the WCF has received 603 funding applications from 53 countries around the world. Forty projects have received production and distribution funding so far, 17 of which have been completed, such as the internationally acclaimed movie *Paradise Now* by Hany Abu-Assad and *Stilles Licht* by Carlos Reygadas. You can find more information about the *World Cinema Fund* at [www.berlinale.de](http://www.berlinale.de).

## bipolar pays tribute to györgy ligeti

The German-Hungarian cultural encounters programme *Bipolar* will come to a close this October with a gala event honouring the Hungarian composer György Ligeti. The highlight of the evening will be Ligeti's chamber concert for thirteen instrumentalists, performed by the Berlin *Ensemble Ligatura* and conducted by Ferenc Gábor. The ensemble will also present the world premieres of pieces by Balázs Horváth <sup>(H)</sup>, Martin Grütter <sup>(D)</sup> und Péter Koszeghy <sup>(H)</sup> as part of the composition contest coordinated in cooperation with the *Hungarian Accent*. The winner of the contest will be selected that evening by an international jury headed by the Hungarian composer Péter Eötvös. In 2006 and 2007 *Bipolar* initiated more than 30 cooperative projects involving German and Hungarian artists. For more information, please visit [www.projekt-bipolar.net](http://www.projekt-bipolar.net). The final concert will take place at the Berlin Academy of the Arts at Pariser Platz on 13 October 2007.

## battleship potemkin now available on dvd

The completely restored revolutionary masterpiece *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) by Sergei Eisenstein was celebrated as a «film event of deeply moving significance» by the German press at its premiere in Berlin. The *Battleship Potemkin* represents a milestone of cinematic history — especially in combination with Edmund Meisel's brilliantly composed film score. Two years following the restoration project headed by Enno Patalas, the Deutsche Kinemathek and Transit Film have produced a DVD Special Edition that includes Edmund Meisel's film score newly arranged by Helmut Imig and a documentary on the eventful history of the *Battleship Potemkin*. You can find more information about this DVD at [www.transitifilm.de](http://www.transitifilm.de).

## shrinking cities exhibition on tour in europe until 2008

After successful showings in Venice, Detroit and Tokyo, *Shrinking Cities* will return to Europe this autumn. The exhibition will go on display at the cities where the project originally collected much of its data — the former industrial metropolises of Manchester and Liverpool (14 Nov. 2007 — 20 Jan. 2008) — and also at the German Museum of Architecture (DAM) in Frankfurt/Main (30 Nov. 2007 — 20 Jan. 2008). Between 17 February and 27 April 2008 the exhibition will tour the Ruhr region (Dortmund: Museum am Ostwall / Duisburg: Liebfrauenkirche) and will conclude with a final showing at the Museum of History of St. Petersburg in the Peter and Paul Fortress (7 Mar. — 28 April 2008). For more information, visit [www.shrinkingcities.com](http://www.shrinkingcities.com).

## focus on brazil in third year of litrix.de

The goal of the Internet-based project *Litrix.de* is to demonstrate the diversity of German-language literature to international audiences, increase its popularity abroad and support foreign translations of current German-language publications. Each year *Litrix.de* focuses on a country or region of the world where it wishes to strengthen the cultural exchange with Germany. The activities in Brazil, which include a translation funding programme, began in June 2007 and will continue until 2008. In cooperation with the Goethe Institutes in Brazil and various local partners from the literary and publishing branch, *Litrix.de* will organize readings and discussions with German writers and offer workshops for publishers and translators. The project receives expert consultation from a jury of Brazilian literary critics and translators. Visit [www.litrix.de](http://www.litrix.de) for more information.

## readings for the last days

In cooperation with the Suhrkamp Verlag, the Federal Cultural Foundation asked writers to venture on expeditions into various professional fields as part of its *Future of Labour* programme. Their job was to take the perspective of an observer from the future and then describe and comment on the working world of today. Sixteen *Labour Reports for the Last Days* have been produced for this project, all of which describe the reality of the working world in 2006. The contributors include Bernd Cailoux, Dietmar Dath, Felix Ensslin, Wilhelm Genazino, Peter Glaser, Gabriele Goettle, Thomas Kapielski, Georg Klein, Harriet Köhler, André Kubiczek, Thomas Raab, Kathrin Röggla, Oliver Maria Schmitt, Jörg Schröder and Barbara Kalender, Josef Winkler, Feridun Zaimoglu and Juli Zeh. The book will be presented in Berlin on 16 November 2007 and in Cologne in January 2008 with readings titled «Leseschicht!» (Reading Shift!). The writers will read their stories, provide insights into various professional fields, describe their reporting activities and talk with guests one-on-one. Please visit our website [www.kulturstiftung-bund.de](http://www.kulturstiftung-bund.de) for the exact times and more information about the event.

*Schicht! Arbeitsreportagen für die Endzeit* (The Labour Reports for the Last Days), approx. 300 pages, Frankfurt 2006, ISBN: 978-3-518-12508-3. Release date: October 2007.

## awards for films in the short film compilation do what you want

Several films in the short film compilation *do what you want*, one of the projects in the Federal Cultural Foundation's *Future of Labour* programme, have been awarded prizes at numerous film festivals. *Wie ich ein freier Reisebegleiter wurde* (How I became a free travelling companion) by Jan Peters not only received the jury and audience prize in the film competition at the International Short Film Festival in Hamburg, but also the jury and audience prize at the International Video Film Festival in Bochum and the German Film Critic Prize 2007 in the category «Experimental Film». Markus Dietrich's film *Outsourcing* was included in the Next Generation Short Film Feature shown at the Cannes Film Festival, and was awarded the Murnau Short Film Prize 2007. Markus Dietrich, as the writer and director of *Outsourcing*, also received the dkf Director's Promotion Prize 2007. *Bus* by Jens Schillmöller and Lale Nalpantoglu was the only German short film competing at the Berlinale International Film Festival in 2007. The short film feature is currently touring cinemas throughout Germany. Upcoming screenings are listed at [www.machdochwasduwilst.org](http://www.machdochwasduwilst.org).

## new book and film about the 100,000 euro job — useful opinions of work

The project *100,000 EURO JOB* examined how young people felt about work today and in the future in a series of films, videos, performances, events, Podcast operas, plays and exhibitions. A book about the project will be published in autumn 2007 — a collection of texts about work in every situation by Jörg Albrecht, Holm Friebe, Johnny Häusler, Markus Kavka, Jörn Morisse, Kathrin Passig, Lisa Rank, Jochen Schmidt, Ulrike Sterblich and others. Supatopcheckerbunny will present and comment on all 47 projects funded by the *100,000 EURO JOB*. You can pre-order the book *Der 100.000 EURO JOB-Ratgeber: nützliche und neue Ansichten zur Arbeit* (including DVD) at [www.100.000-EURO-JOB.de](http://www.100.000-EURO-JOB.de).

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